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THE

STATE OF THE IMPENITENT DEAD.

BY

ALVAH HOVEY, D.D.

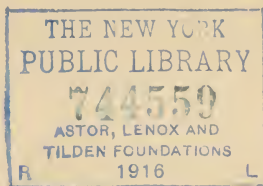
PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN THE NEWTON
THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.

"O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" *Romans ix. 20.*

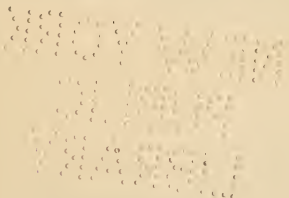
Heaven and earth shall pass away, but thy word shall not pass away."

Matthew xxiv. 35.

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P R E F A C E.

AT the request of Christian brethren, who are familiar with the topics of religious inquiry now before the community, and therefore now demanding special treatment, this Essay is given to the public.* It is an attempt to set forth in brief the Scriptural testimony for a momentous doctrine, and to remove certain popular objections to that doctrine. It does not profess to exhaust the evidence in support of the view which is maintained, nor does it undertake a

* The Essay was read before the Conference of Baptist Ministers of Massachusetts, at their annual meeting held in Worcester, Oct. 26, 1858. Subsequently, the Conference "voted unanimously that it would be exceedingly gratifying to them if the Author would give the Essay to the public in any manner most agreeable to himself."

reply to all the assaults upon that view; but it simply aims to present the decisive considerations, the cardinal points of the argument, so that one who pursues the question no further may have at least good and sufficient reasons for the belief which he entertains. And if, by the blessing of Him whose "word liveth and abideth forever," this object is gained, the desire of the writer in committing these pages to the public will also be accomplished.

A. H.

NEWTON CENTRE, DEC. 16, 1858.

CONTENTS.

SECTION I.

BODY AND SOUL.

ORIGINAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SOUL, THE FORMER BEING MADE CORRUPTIBLE, THE LATTER INCORRUPTIBLE.—HENCE, AN ORIGINAL DIFFERENCE OF RELATION TO ENDLESS EXISTENCE, THE FORMER BEING, AND THE LATTER NOT BEING, ADAPTED TO THE SAME.— THIS ADAPTATION MADE MANIFEST BY THE PROPERTIES OF THE SOUL,	11
--	----

SECTION II.

DEATH AND LIFE.

NATURE OF DEATH, THE PENALTY OF SIN, AS INDICATED (1) BY THE NARRATIVE IN GENESIS ; (2) BY THE USE OF THE TERM DEATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT; AND (3) BY THE USE OF ITS OPPOSITE, THE TERM LIFE,	28
--	----

SECTION III.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

PROOF OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE—

- (1) FROM THE WORDS OF CHRIST; (2) FROM THE WORDS OF PETER; (3) FROM THE WORDS OF PAUL; (4) FROM THE WORDS OF CHRIST.—OBJECTIONS TO THIS—(1) FROM SCRIPTURE; AND (2) FROM REASON,..... 53

SECTION IV.

THE FINAL STATE.

EXTRACTS FROM JOSEPHUS AND TACITUS.—TESTIMONY OF

- CHRIST AFTER HIS ASCENSION.—HIS TESTIMONY WHILE YET ON EARTH.—REPLY TO ANOTHER INTERPRETATION OF HIS LANGUAGE,..... 74

SECTION V.

BIBLICAL OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

- (1) "DEATH," THE EXTINCTION OF CONSCIOUS BEING.—THEORY OF HAM.—THEORY OF HUDSON.—(2) "DESTRUCTION," THE EXTINCTION OF CONSCIOUS BEING.—SUPPORTS OF THIS VIEW.—OBJECTIONS TO IT,..... 93

SECTION VI.

FURTHER OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

- (1) THE DEAD PRONOUNCED UNCONSCIOUS BY OLD TESTAMENT WRITERS.—REPLY TO THIS STATEMENT.—(2) THE LANGUAGE OF THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS AND EARLY APOLOGISTS CONFIRMATORY OF THE PRECEDING OBJECTIONS.—THIS ASSUMPTION SHOWN TO BE INCORRECT, ... 124

SECTION VII.

RATIONAL OBJECTIONS.

- INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.—OBJECTIONS (1) FROM THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.—REPLY.—(2) FROM THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.—REPLY.—(3) FROM THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD.—REPLY.—CONCLUSION, 142

THE STATE OF THE IMPENITENT DEAD.

SECTION I.

BODY AND SOUL.

ORIGINAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SOUL, THE FORMER BEING MADE CORRUPTIBLE, THE LATTER INCORRUPTIBLE. — HENCE, AN ORIGINAL DIFFERENCE OF RELATION TO ENDLESS EXISTENCE, THE FORMER BEING, AND THE LATTER NOT BEING, ADAPTED TO THE SAME. — THIS ADAPTATION MADE MANIFEST BY THE PROPERTIES OF THE SOUL.

No topic within the range of human thought is approached by the majority of good men with greater reluctance than the topic of this essay. Many indeed prefer to avoid, if possible, all reference to the final state of unbelievers, and sometimes, it may be feared, shrink from a careful study of the language employed by the sacred writers to describe that state. It will therefore occasion no surprise, if we say that the following pages

owe their existence, primarily, to the claims made upon the writer by his employment; for otherwise, so awful is the doom which seems to be denounced by the word of God upon such as remain impenitent, he might have been led to defer still longer a protracted examination of the elements of that doom. Hence, too, the general form and style of this essay, the occasional insertion of a Greek word or clause, and the fresh translation of a passage now and then from the original text, may remind our readers of the use to which it was first applied, but will not obscure the course or diminish the value of our investigation.

It need scarcely be said, that we undertook the discussion of our theme, not only with conscious reluctance, from a sense of duty, but also with a deep conviction of its unrivalled solemnity and importance; feeling that it would be wronging the character of God, on the one hand, to represent him as threatening and inflicting a heavier penalty upon sinners than he has really threatened, and, on the other hand, that it would be wronging his character no less to represent him as annexing a milder penalty to transgression than he has really annexed; feeling that in this case, as in every other, it is our duty to abide by the testimony which God has given,

leaving every difficulty and mystery to be cleared by the light of an after life.

We shall therefore endeavor to ascertain, by an appeal to the word of God, the true meaning of the term *death*, when used by sacred writers to denote the *penalty* of sin, and then to examine the principal objections to this meaning. This investigation will lead us directly to the ultimate object of our essay, namely, a knowledge of the state of the impenitent dead. And we may open our way to the Biblical use of the term *death* by observing, —

I. *That the Scriptures recognize an original and important difference between the soul of man and his body.* God is said to have created man in his own image;¹ and this image or likeness of God must be found, we suppose, in the rational and moral properties of the human soul, as it came from the hand of God. If the resemblance of man to his Maker be not found in this part of his nature, it seems impossible for him to obtain any distinct and trustworthy conception of God. If he cannot transfer from his own spirit to the infinite One the generic ideas of knowing, of feeling, and of willing — if he cannot assume that his own soul is in some proper sense a copy of the divine

¹ Gen. i. 26, 27.

mind, though on a scale infinitely reduced, he may well despair, not merely of knowing as he is known,¹ but of ever being assured that his worship is paid to the living God, instead of a phantom originated by his imagination. For certain it is, that we can form no conception whatever of a personal Deity, without ascribing to him cognitive, emotive, and voluntary powers, that is to say, the fundamental powers of the human soul.

In another place we are told that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;"² — language which appears to distinguish the vital, informing principle of human nature from its material part, pronouncing the former to be more directly from God, and akin to him, than the latter; and it may be doubted whether one reader in a thousand, if left to himself, would take any other view of the case.

Again, the Almighty describes himself as "Jehovah which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him;"³ — words which seem plainly to recognize the soul as distinct in nature from the body, and to assign it

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

² Gen. ii. 7.

³ Zech. xii. 1.

a dignity and worth far beyond that of any material organism. It was the forming of man's spirit which the prophet looked upon as the crowning work of Jehovah, and cited, along with the creation of heaven and of earth, as a proof of his almighty power.

The language of Paul belongs also to our argument. "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago — whether in the body I know not, or out of the body I know not, God knoweth — such an one caught up into the third heaven,"¹ etc. Now if the apostle, as he undoubtedly affirms, was distinctly conscious of having been caught up into paradise, and of having been permitted to hear words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, while at the same time he was uncertain whether his whole nature, body and soul, or only the latter, was caught up, is it not manifest that he deemed it possible for the soul to be conscious and active, apart from the body? Is it not manifest that he esteemed the personality of man separable from a material organism, and capable of ecstatic joy in a disembodied state?

If, now, we add to these passages the testimony of Solomon, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, but the spirit shall return to God

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 2. seq.

who gave it;¹ the prayer of Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;"² and the words of Christ, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,"³ the conclusion becomes inevitable, that the Scriptures do recognize an original and important difference between the soul of man and his body. It may be well to observe, —

II. *That this original difference between the nature of man's body and that of his soul underlies a difference of relation to endless existence.* For the body of Adam seems to have been *mortal*, even before the fall. It was made of the dust of the ground; it was *χοϊκός*, *earthy*, and therefore in its nature corruptible. And so the immortality of man, as a complex being, was conditioned on his eating of the tree of life. This was made the pledge, if not the means, of a process by which his animal body might be exchanged for a spiritual body, and this corruptible put on incorruption. Thus much may be inferred, we think, from the language and the action of God after the great apostasy in Eden: "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever — therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from

¹ Eccl. xii. 7.

² Acts vii. 59.

³ Matt. x. 28.

whence he was taken.”¹ In the natural course of events, had not sin intervened, Adam would surely have eaten of the tree of life, and have become immortal. The fruit of that sacramental or life-giving tree would in due time have secured to him perpetual vigor, and have made him meet in bodily organism for an inheritance “incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.”

This view of the original and natural mortality of the body is confirmed by the language of Paul. For he not only teaches that our bodies, as now constituted, are animal and corruptible, but also that “the first man, Adam, was made a living soul,”² when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and from the context it appears that the apostle understood the phrase “living soul” to denote a being whose body was *psychical* and mortal, a body of flesh and blood, which could not inherit the kingdom of God. He then proceeds to announce a general law: “The spiritual is not first, but the *psychical* (or natural), afterwards the spiritual.”³ The lower precedes the higher; the imperfect the perfect;

¹ Gen. iii. 22, 23.

² 1 Cor. xv. 45. Cf. the commentaries of Hodge, Alford, Meyer, and De Wette on this verse.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 46.

and this general law of development was to be illustrated according to the plan of God, in the bodily nature of man. With this view agree the remarks of Meyer on a subsequent passage: "The first man is of the earth, earthy — *χοϊκος*. Since the body of Adam is thus, as in v. 45, characterized as a *ψυχικὸν σῶμα*, or psychical body, and since a psychical organism involves *mortality* (v. 44), it is clear that Paul, in perfect agreement with Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19, considers Adam *not as created immortal*. Nor does this conflict with his doctrine that death came into the world *through sin*.¹ For had not our first parents sinned, they would have remained in paradise, and would have become immortal by eating of the tree of life, which God had not forbidden them.² But ere they had eaten of this tree,³ they were driven out of paradise, and so, also, according to the narrative in Genesis, death came into the world by sin."

It may be suitable to add, that the same view is proposed and defended by Augustine. "*Sic et illud corpus jam erat mortale; quam mortalitatem fuerat absumptura mutatio in æternam incorruptionem, si in homine justitia, id est obedientia, per-*

¹ Rom. v. 12.

² Gen. iii. 22; ii. 16, 17.

³ Gen. iii. 22.

*maneret; sed ipsum non est factum mortuum, nisi propter peccatum."*¹

Let us then bear in mind the fact that God anticipated the apostasy of our race, and foreshadowed the same by giving to man a corruptible body. The material part of human nature was preadjusted to a sinful condition; its doom in case of transgression was provided for in its original constitution. To say the least, it was not adapted to endless existence. It gave no intimation of perpetual vigor. Forces from without must be applied to change its nature, before it could bear the weight of immortality.

But how was it with the *soul* of man? Do the Scriptures anywhere intimate that this also was mortal by virtue of its original constitution? Do they mention any *ab extra* appliances by which its primeval nature was to be changed, before it could enter upon a life without end? Instead of this we find expressions in the sacred record which seem to favor an opposite view.

For our present purpose, it will be sufficient to adduce Paul's remarkable chapter on the resurrection, — *Quod unum instar est omnium*. And let it be remembered that the apostle in

¹ De Pec. Mer. et Remis, I. 5.

that chapter fails to drop even a hint of the need of any change in the natural properties of the human spirit to prepare it for endless being. He plainly avers the unfitness of our bodily nature for the eternal world, but refrains from any such testimony respecting our spiritual nature.

Now if Paul believed the soul of man to be corruptible and mortal like his body, his silence on this point, in a chapter that treats so fully of the resurrection, is not a little surprising. For if the Corinthians deemed the spirit of man to be adapted in its nature to a higher and endless state of being, and if this belief was in Paul's opinion erroneous, why did he not rectify their error, check their confidence in a vain philosophy, and teach them that of the soul, no less than the body, it may be said, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality?" Why did he not remind them of their folly in proposing the skeptical question, "With what *body* do they come?" while they neglected the parallel question, "With what *spirit* do they come?" But if, on the other hand, the Corinthians looked upon the soul of man as related to death and the resurrection in the same way as his body, and were troubled with similar doubts respecting it, why did the

apostle restrict his discussion to the body merely, and neglect to intimate, by a single remark, that the spirit is also to experience a no less essential and glorious change at the resurrection? We therefore submit the opinion, that Paul's silence as to any change of the properties of the soul at the resurrection is a sound argument against its natural mortality, and in favor of its original and present adaptation to endless existence.

We may, however, proceed a step further. In the chapter before us we find another reason for supposing that the apostle regarded the human soul as originally fitted to exist forever. After contrasting the body laid aside at death with that which we shall possess hereafter, in several particulars, he says: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a *spiritual* body."¹ Whether the word *spiritual* here describes the *essence* or the *office* of our bodily nature after the resurrection, it is plain that the *spirit* is conceived of as adapted to a future life. For if the body is to be made incorruptible by being made spiritual in its nature, then must the spirit itself, to which it is assimilated, be incorruptible and immortal. Or if the body is to be made incorruptible by

being made the proper and permanent organ of the spirit,¹ it is scarcely less evident that the latter is incorruptible. "The servant is not greater than his lord."

But there is a grave objection, it may be said, to the argument now presented, to wit: the apostle has in mind the resurrection of believers only, and the souls of believers receive at the moment of regeneration a principle of life which prepares them for endless being. Without this principle, they are as incapable of eternal existence as the body.

The plan of our essay will soon bring us to the investigation of what is meant in the word of God by spiritual life; and this investigation will furnish a reply to the objection just stated. It may, however, be observed, in passing, that regeneration is not only characterized by the sacred writers as a creative act, by which the subject of it becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus, and a generation from above, by which the soul is brought into a new spiritual life; but also as a washing, a bathing effected by the Holy Ghost, by which the polluted spirit is cleansed; as an illumination, by which it is filled with the

¹ See the commentaries of De Wette, Meyer, Olshausen, Alford, Hodge, and Ruckhert, on the passage cited above.

knowledge of God and qualified to appreciate spiritual things, and as a change of mind, involving sorrow for sin and love for holiness. The eye of conscience is cleared, the desires and affections are reversed and flow into new channels, and the selfish views, prejudices, and motives which formerly reigned in the soul, are superseded by faith, love, and hope, resting in Christ and leading to every good work. The entire spirit is readjusted morally; its aspirations, tendencies, and relations to God are rectified, and it enters, so to speak, upon a new life.

But all this pertains to the moral condition and experience of the soul, affording no evidence that its essence has been changed, that any faculty or constitutive element has been added, any fresh vigor or new principle of existence infused. And until such evidence is furnished, the objection to our argument from the language of Paul is without force.

It will not be irrelevant to add, that those beings who are represented by the word of God as dwelling in the invisible and eternal world are frequently called spirits. God, "who only hath immortality," is affirmed to be spirit. The holy angels are described as "ministering spirits." Demons are spoken of as evil spirits.

And departed saints, dwelling in paradise and awaiting the resurrection, are denominated "the spirits of just men made perfect." It seems, therefore, that all who inhabit the eternal world are either simple spirits, or are spirits clothed with bodies which are perfectly adjusted and assimilated to their spiritual nature. Now it would doubtless be rash to draw from this fact alone the conclusion, that, because human souls are frequently called spirits in the word of God, therefore they must have been originally fitted for endless existence; but when we bear in mind the process by which words relating to earth and to man are transferred to beings or events of a higher sphere, the fact noted by us may well serve to strengthen our confidence in a deduction from other and surer premises. We proceed to remark, —

III. *That the original adaptation of the human soul to endless existence may be inferred from its rational and moral properties.* For, first, it is brought by these properties into conscious personal connection with the infinite and the eternal. It is put *en rapport*, so to speak, with the one absolute Personality, with the immutable principles of right, and with the idea of causation, binding the creature to the Creator, the conditioned to

the absolute. And, secondly, it is rendered by these properties capable of action without weariness, and delight without satiety. We do not hesitate to trace all the fatigue which results from intense and protracted thought to the material organ of the mind. Our best intellectual processes never flag until the brain begins to suffer. It would be easy to illustrate and confirm the position now taken by many interesting phenomena of dreaming. Again, our rational and moral tastes are never satiated. Whatever is truly sublime or beautiful, answering to the normal susceptibilities of our spiritual nature, "is a joy forever." Bodily appetites are soon glutted, and we are even made to loathe, for a time, the objects which just before were craved; but our spiritual relish for the true, the beautiful, and the good, is never diminished by the fullest gratification. Who was ever satisfied to loathing with the grandeur of Niagara, the sublimity of Mount Washington, or the majesty of the ocean? Who was ever made to turn away with a sense of satiety from the sight of a sunset sky, or of a beautiful landscape, or of a delicate flower? Or, still more to our purpose, who was ever conscious that the mental vision of a geometrical figure, the admiration of an act

of moral heroism, or the exercise of a right affection, however protracted, had produced in him even a temporary disrelish of those objects? Is it not a fact, that the soul is so made as to be capable of permanent delight in whatever corresponds with its normal tastes? — so made, that its pleasure in the apprehension of a suitable object is not necessarily intermitted or transitory, but may be at once complete and perennial? And does not this peculiarity of the soul qualify it for endless existence, and even foreshadow such existence? It seems to us that but one reply can be made to these questions. And, thirdly, the soul was evidently adapted in the beginning, by its rational and moral properties, “to glorify God and enjoy him forever.” And notwithstanding the terrible shock and change which it experienced in the apostasy, it has a religious nature still, and is still called upon evermore to worship him who is God over all, blessed forever. We discover, or seem to discover, in this religious nature of the soul, this innate testimony for the ever-living God, this silent call and command, issuing from the very centre of the spirit, to engage in his worship, a qualification for, and a prophecy of, immortality. To unfold this argument, however, would detain

us too long, and we therefore bring these preliminary observations to a close.

We have seen that the body of man was made in the beginning *corruptible*, and that bodily death, a penal result of sin, was provided for in his original constitution. We have also seen that the soul of man was made originally *incorruptible*, adapted to endless existence. And this difference, we submit, establishes a valid presumption that the penal result of sin to the soul does not consist in its dissolution or extinction. The strength of this presumption will of course depend almost entirely upon the view which is entertained by each individual of the eternal purpose, order, and harmony of the divine government. We can but think it is entitled to great consideration; and the more, because it will be found that provision *was* made in the original structure of the soul for a penal result of sin, which is called death in the word of God.

SECTION II.

DEATH AND LIFE.

NATURE OF DEATH, THE PENALTY OF SIN, AS INDICATED (1) BY THE NARRATIVE IN GENESIS, (2) BY THE USE OF THE TERM DEATH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND (3) BY THE USE OF ITS OPPOSITE, THE TERM LIFE.

To ascertain the nature of death, the penalty of sin, we may first examine the language of Jehovah to Adam before the fall: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."¹ Here Adam is threatened with certain death in case of disobedience. The verb is made emphatic by repetition; as if God had said, Death, death, certain death, shall be the reward of transgression.

But this threatening, however emphatic and ominous it may be, does not in itself indicate the nature or contents of death. God, to be sure, may have explained its nature to our first

parents; but, if so, his explanation was not put on record for our instruction.

Yet there is a clause in the verse before us, which may perhaps furnish no little aid to those who would discover the contents of this threatened death. "*In the day of thy eating of it, thou shalt surely die.*" Disobedience was to be followed by *immediate* punishment.

If, now, we examine the narrative in Genesis, we shall discover the first fruits of the fall in the *souls* of Adam and Eve. Shame at their own nakedness, and dread of Jehovah's presence, both springing from guilt, began at once to be felt. Thus it was the soul which experienced the first stroke of retributive justice. Its fellowship with God and consequent blessedness were lost. And for this result, so fatal to the well-being of man, ample provision had been made in the properties of his spiritual nature. The ministers of divine justice had been stationed in every part of the town of Mansoul, and no sooner was sin admitted, than they began to frown upon the guilty place, filling it with terror and confusion.

But this great penalty, following close on the heels of transgression, and provided for in the original constitution of the soul, was not the ex-

tion of conscious being, but the extinction of conscious well-being—was not the loss of existence, but rather the loss of true spiritual life, which is the normal and blessed working of a moral nature. It was a dissolution of man's spiritual relation to God; a separation far more disastrous than that of soul and body in physical death.

And when "in the breeze of the day" God called the guilty pair before him, what was the sentence which he pronounced? Upon the woman birth-throes and subjection to man, and upon the man wearisome toil until his body should return to the dust. Nothing is here said of death, except in the final words, "Until thou returnest to the ground," etc.; and no one will pretend that these words comprise all the evil which was threatened as the penalty of sin, when God said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." For if we may interpret the threatened punishment of transgression by the recorded effects of it upon the feelings and conduct of our first parents, this penalty had two elements, suffering and loss, and took effect, chiefly at least, in the soul rather than the body. On the positive side, there were shame and remorse, followed by toil

and pain; and on the negative side, there were the loss of fellowship with God, and of the fruit of the tree of life, together with all the advantages of paradise.

And what better terms than life and death could have been chosen to characterize the different states of the soul before and after so dreadful a catastrophe. Love, light, fellowship with God, gave place to bitterness, alienation, darkness.* The normal and blessed action of the spirit was reversed forever. The moral magnetism, which should have drawn it evermore towards the Centre and Source of all goodness, was destroyed, and like the arch fiend in Milton's sublime epic, it "took its solitary way into the realms of Chaos and old Night." It was lost, separated from God; and this, we think, was the all-comprehending and tremendous penalty of sin. Bodily death was but the shadow of this spiritual ruin. Like birth-pangs and oppressive toil, it fitly accompanied the more dreadful doom of the soul.

We do not, however, claim that all this is indubitably taught by the narrative in Genesis; but we do claim that, according to this narrative, the *chief* penalty of sin was inflicted upon the soul and not upon the body. And from the

words, "in the day that thou eatest thereof," interpreted by the subsequent history, we also conclude and maintain that the clause, "thou shalt surely die," was not employed to denote extinction of being, but to denote a forlorn and miserable existence; that is to say, we hold that the term death, when used by sacred writers to signify the penalty of sin, refers to the destruction of well-being rather than of simple existence.

But is there anything in the word of God, apart from the history in Genesis, to confirm this view? Is there any evidence that the term death, when applied to the soul, may signify something else than a termination of its conscious life? Any proof that the affirmation of eternal death may virtually be the affirmation of eternal existence?

In reply to these queries, we first appeal to these words of Christ: "Follow me, and let *the dead* bury their *dead*."¹ Here the first *τοὺς νεκροὺς* refers to those who are *spiritually* dead, that is, to unbelievers in Christ; while the second refers to those who are *physically* dead. This view of the words is taken by nearly all

¹ Matt. viii. 22.

respectable interpreters,¹ and it gives not only the most obvious meaning of terms as here employed, but a meaning which has also borne the test of repeated and severe scrutiny. No other view so well accords with the manifest scope of the passage.

We pass next to the language of Christ to the church in Sardis: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou *livest*, and *art dead*."² The seven churches of Asia were addressed by the Saviour, through his apostle, in order to rekindle their zeal for God, and make them watchful against error and steadfast in the faith. Some of them had lost their first love. Some of them observed the formal duties of Christianity, but had little or no spiritual life. Their works did not spring from faith, and were therefore dead.³ The church in Sardis was thus dead. It had the form of godliness, but not the life and power. This is the only natural interpretation of the passage, and is sustained by the judgment of the great body of careful expositors.⁴ Vitranga remarks, that many of "these

¹ Eg. De Wette, Meyer, Olshausen, Stier, Alford, Ripley, and others.

² Rev. iii. 1.

³ See Heb. vi. 1; ix. 14.

⁴ Eg. Robinson, De Wette, Meyer, Hengstenberg, Stuart, Ebrard, and others.

Asiatic churches now presented, as to their major part, rather the lurid aspect of death than the vivid expression of life—*magis luridam mortis, quam vividam vitæ speciem.*”

Turning now to the writings of Paul, we find him saying to the Colossians: “And you, being dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him;”¹ and to the Ephesians: “You who were dead in trespasses and sins — hath he quickened.”² The obvious teaching of these passages is that both the Ephesian and the Colossian Christians were, previous to their regeneration, morally dead, and that by regeneration they had obtained spiritual life. Says Calvin: “*Dicit mortuos fuisse: et simul exprimit mortis causam, nempe peccata. Non intelligit solum fuisse in mortis periculo: sed realem mortem significat ac præsentem, qua jam erant oppressi. Nam spiritualis mors nihil aliud sit, quam alienatio animæ a Deo, omnes mortui nascimur, et mortui vivimus, donec efficiamur virtæ Christi participes.*” On the word *νεκρὸς*, in the passage from Ephesians, Alford remarks: “The whole of the subsequent mercy of God, in his quickening them, is *spiritual*, and therefore of

¹ Col. ii. 13.

² Eph. ii. 1, 5.

necessity the death also. That it *involves* physical death is most true; but, as I have often had occasion to remark, this latter is so subordinate to spiritual death, as often hardly to come into account in Scripture." Ellicott takes the same view of this word, and says that "the proleptic reference to physical death seems irreconcilable with the context."

Moreover, in his first letter to Timothy, Paul makes use of this expression: "She that liveth riotously is dead while she liveth;"¹ literally *living*, she is *dead*. Death and life are here predicated of the same person, at the same time. By using the form *τέθνηκεν*, which signifies *has died*, and so *is dead* in the present tense, the apostle declares that being dead is compatible with being at the same time alive. But the life here spoken of is plainly one of conscious existence; and hence the death referred to cannot involve a negation of such existence. It must rather be the opposite or negative of some higher life, some better condition, and finer flow of being. That is to say, it must be spiritual death, the insensibility, darkness, and misery of a soul alienated from God.

On the words to which we have now called

¹ 1 Tim. v. 6.

attention, Schöttgen remarks, "The Jews often employ this oxymoron in their writings. In general, all the impious are thus denominated by them." He proceeds to cite from the Rabbins such expressions as follow : " 'The ungodly, even in this life, are pronounced dead. The ungodly man, who walks not in the way of truth, is said to be dead.' ¹ 'I praised the dead, who died before.' From which it is evident that they of whom the verse speaks are alive, and yet are said to be dead. ² 'For the living know that they must die, but the dead know nothing.' By the living, are to be understood the just; by the dead, the unjust." Again : "Those are meant who, even in death, are called living. 'And the dead know nothing;' here the ungodly are meant, who, even in the activity of life, are called dead." ³

However erroneous may be some of these interpretations, they illustrate the use of the term death to signify a moral condition of the soul, and we cite them merely to prove this use of the term by early Jewish writers. A thorough survey of Rabbinic testimony would not, we suppose, fail to justify the general statement of Schöttgen, introduced above.

¹ Eccl. iv. 2.

² Eccl. ix. 5.

³ See Schöttgen's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, I. pp. 191, 377.

With the passages already considered might be associated many others,¹ in which some form or derivative of *θνήσκω* (*to die*) is applied to the unregenerate in this life; but it would be superfluous to accumulate evidence on the point. It can hardly be denied, that "death," "being dead," "dying," etc., are by the Scriptures predicated of the soul no less than of the body, and that, when affirmed of the former, these terms do not generally, if ever, involve an extinction of conscious being. And this application of the word death to the conscious spirit of man, in other parts of the sacred record, confirms our exposition of the penalty denounced upon sin in Genesis.

This exposition is also sustained by the use which is made of the term "life," in many passages of the inspired volume. For this word is employed by the New Testament writers to designate the *kind* of conscious being possessed by Christians, rather than the mere fact of existence, a blessed life in fellowship with God, rather than simple being. We begin with the language of Christ.

On a certain occasion, he pronounced it necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up,

¹ Eg. Rom. vi. 13; xi. 15; Eph. v. 14, etc.

“that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but *have eternal life*”¹ — ἐχὼν ζωὴν αἰώνιον. *Χωρὴν αἰώνιον*, says Meyer, who “is, perhaps, the best commentator on the New Testament, of modern times,”² signifies the eternal Messianic life, which, however, the believer already possesses — ἐχὼν — in this αἰὼν, that is, in the temporal development of that moral and blessed life which is independent of death, and which will culminate in perfection and glory at the coming of Christ.” And Lücke, whose commentary on the gospel of John is one of the most thorough and attractive in the German language, says that the ζωὴ αἰώνιος, which is the exact opposite of ἀπώλεια (*destruction*), or θάνατος (*death*), is the sum of Messianic blessedness. It is plain, we think, that the life here spoken of as the present possession of every believer in Christ is more than endless existence; it is life in the fullest and highest sense of the word, the free, holy and blessed action of the whole man, that is to say, the proper, normal living of a rational and moral being. The germ, the principle of this life, exists in the heart of every believer; it is a present possession. “Whosoever,” says Christ,

¹ John iii. 15.

² Dr. Hodge, of Princeton.

“drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain — πηγή — of water, springing up into everlasting life.”¹ In another place our Saviour utters these words: “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath eternal life*, and shall not come into condemnation, *but has passed from death into life*”² — μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν. Here, again, the believer is said to *have* eternal life, even now; for he has passed from death into life. *Ingens saltus*, remarks Bengel, with his customary brevity and graphic power. We translate a part of Lücke’s ample and instructive note on this important verse.

“The words, ‘Has passed from death into life,’ determine that ἔχει (*hath*) must be taken as a strict present. For the verb μεταβέβηκεν (*has passed*) affirms that the transition from death into life took place with the hearing and believing. Only if an impossible thought were thus expressed, could we consent, as in a case of extreme necessity, to understand the present ἔχει and the present perfect μεταβέβηκεν as futures. And then we should be compelled to say that

¹ John iv. 14.

² John v. 24.

John had expressed himself very strangely. But if a higher kind of life, a resurrection process prior to bodily death, is represented by 'hath,' and 'hath passed,' then ζωή and ζωή αἰώνιος are not to be understood of a life commencing after bodily death, but of the true and eternal Messianic life or salvation, beginning even here. This life does not, to be sure, exclude natural death, but neither does it first begin after this death.¹ Even so θάνατος cannot be understood of bodily, but only of spiritual death, of lying in the darkness of the world. This interpretation would be justified here, even if θάνατος elsewhere in the New Testament denoted uniformly nothing but bodily death. But the metaphorical idea of death stands out clearly in 1 John iii. 14; v. 16, 17; John viii. 51, 52; 2 Cor. ii. 16; vii. 10. Similar, also, is the use of the words θανατοῦν, Rom. vii. 4; viii. 13; and νεκρός, νεκροῦν, ἀποθνήσκειν, Matt. viii. 22; Eph. v. 14; Heb. vi. 1; Col. iii. 5; Gal. ii. 19."

With the passage now examined may be compared a statement of the apostle John to the same effect, namely, "We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren; he that loveth not, abideth in death."²

¹ Cf. v. 40.

² 1 John iii. 14.

This language, explained with a due regard to the preceding context, speaks, evidently, of spiritual death and life, of a passing from one moral condition into another and opposite one. To say that this new moral condition and blessed state is to endure and improve forever, may doubtless be to utter an important truth, but one which does not conflict in the slightest degree with its present existence. It begins in this life; it continues forever and ever.

Again, we find our Saviour saying: "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life;" "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" and, "The words that I speak unto you are spirit, and are life."¹ By these verses we are taught, once more, that the Greek terms which denote life and death, living and dying, were applied by Christ to opposite moral states of the soul. For, observe, (1) he more than intimates that his words, his doctrines, are the source of present life to those who receive them, and that, by eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he signifies a reception of his words, and so of himself as the Lamb of God. And (2) he declares that one who

¹ John vi. 47, 53, 63.

believes *has* eternal life; that one who eats of the true bread shall not die but shall live forever, and that one who does not eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man *hath not life* in himself.

Is it not plain that the words life and death, as well as the words bread, flesh, and blood, eating and drinking, are here used in a spiritual sense? Is it not plain that Jesus here speaks of something in the believer's soul which is nourished by Christian truth, and which is at the same time called life? But it is the function of truth to quicken thought and feeling, to determine the modes of conscious life, the character or moral condition of the human soul; and, hence, the rejection of it may involve the utter want of certain spiritual *qualities* and blessed *emotions*, but not the want of personal existence. In still another place we read, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."¹ Christ here affirms that every believer is exempted from death. And it matters not for our present purpose whether the word

¹ John xi. 25, 26.

ζῶν, translated in our version "liveth," refers in this passage to physical or to moral life. If it refers to physical life, then our Saviour pronounces the Christian to be already, in time, delivered from the power of death, and in possession of a true and immortal life. But if it refers to moral life, Christ declares that whoever possesses this life, whether in the body or out of the body, is delivered from the power of death; that is, his union with God and delight in him, which alone constitute the normal living of the soul, shall never be interrupted: οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα — *he shall never die.*

Yet the words just cited have been said to signify "shall not die *forever*;" that is, shall not suffer *eternal* death; and, thus explained, have been urged in support of the doctrine that death involves the extinction of conscious being.¹ The purpose of this essay permits us to test this novel interpretation, by referring to some of the passages which contain the phrase εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

According to Matthew, Christ said to the fig-tree, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward

¹ *Ham* (J. P.), in "Bible Examined," vol. VII. p. 74: "'Shall not die *forever*;' he shall die for a time, but not forever; he shall rise again."

forever;"¹ and, according to Mark, "Let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter *forever*."² Would it express the meaning of Christ, in this instance, to render the phrase in question *eternally*, or *in eternity*, instead of *forever*, implying that the tree might bear fruit for a while in time? Again, Christ is reported to have said, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath *never* forgiveness."³ Does this language merely negative the prospect of eternal forgiveness, while it leaves undisturbed the hope of temporal forgiveness? Is God one who really forgives the blasphemer for a time, but cannot forgive him for eternity? Once more: In the gospel written by Luke, Mary is represented as saying, "He hath holpen his servant Israel by remembering mercy, (as he spake to our fathers,) to Abraham and to his seed *forever*."⁴ Did not God show mercy to Abraham and to his seed in time as well as in eternity? Was he not to remember mercy from the time of Abraham *onward* forever, instead, perhaps, of being severe in time, and then gracious in eternity? Again, Jesus says to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again — *πάντα*

¹ Matt. xxi. 19.

² Mark xi. 14.

³ Mark iii. 29.

⁴ Luke i. 54, 55.

—but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall *never* thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a *fountain* of water, welling up into everlasting life.”¹ Here, evidently, it is not asserted that whosoever receives the true water of life shall not thirst *forever*, though he may for a time, but from the reception of this water *onward forever* he shall not thirst. In another place Christ declares, “If any man eat of this bread,”—his own body in contrast with the manna,—“he shall live *forever* ;”² and likewise, “he that eateth of this bread”—again in contrast with the eating of manna and dying—“shall live forever.”³ Still later Christ says, “The servant doth not abide in the house *forever* ; the son abideth *forever* ;” that is to say, the abiding of the servant is merely transient, while that of the son is permanent. And in the same chapter we read, “If a man keep my saying, he shall *never* see death.”⁴ The meaning associated with this form of expression by the Jews is made known by their response: “Abraham died, and the prophets, and thou sayest, If a man keep my word he shall never taste of death.” Again, Christ says

¹ John iv. 13, 14.

² John vi. 51.

³ John vi. 58.

⁴ John viii. 35, 51.

of his sheep, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall *never* perish."¹ Did our Saviour mean to say, They may perish, or be plucked from my hand for a time, but they shall not perish for ever? Once more: "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth *forever*; and how sayest thou the Son of Man must be lifted up?"² Evidently the idea of abiding forever was not equivalent in the minds of these men to abiding in eternity or eternally, the *terminus a quo* beginning in a future world; but it was equivalent to abiding perpetually, from the time of his appearance *onward forever*. Again, Peter is represented as saying to Christ, "Thou shalt *never* wash my feet."³ Would it give the exact sense of this passage to translate it thus: "Thou shalt not wash my feet *forever*, though thou mayest now?" And, finally, Christ tells his disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you *forever*."

We have now brought forward all the passages in the gospels which contain the phrase, *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*, either alone or modified by a negative particle; and we believe it must be clear to all,

¹ John x. 28.

² John xii. 34.

³ John xiii. 8.

that this phrase never signifies *eternally* as the opposite of *temporally*; never refers exclusively to the future and everlasting state. On the other hand, it uniformly starts in time and denies any future limit. The phrase occurs but rarely in the remaining books of the New Testament, and always in the sense given above.

From this partial digression we return to our examination of the term life. "And this is life eternal," says the Great Teacher, "that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."¹ The best ancient and modern interpreters hold this verse to be a definition by Christ himself of the expression "life eternal," so often used by him according to the record of John. De Wette says: "*And this is (therein consists) the life eternal*; not, this is the means of the eternal life; for the vital knowledge of God and Christ is itself the eternal life which begins even here, and penetrates the whole life of the human spirit." Meyer translates thus: "*Therein consists the eternal life*," and says, "This knowledge, willed of God, is the 'eternal life,' inasmuch as it is the essential subjective principle of the latter, its enduring,

¹ John xvii. 3.

eternally unfolding germ and fountain, both now in the temporal development of the eternal life, and hereafter when the kingdom is set up, in which faith, hope, and charity abide, whose essence is that knowledge."¹ The same view, substantially, is presented by Olshausen, Lücke, Bengel, Alford, and many others.

The passage before us may, therefore, be taken as conclusive evidence that the idea of simple life, of personal existence, was not that which Christ intended to express by ἡ ζωὴ and ζωὴ αἰώνιος, as applied by him to Christians. Hence, also, there is ample reason for supposing that he did not mean by the word θάνατος, as the opposite or negative of these words, literal death, or an end of conscious being. Both terms have rather a spiritual sense, and are used to designate the moral condition of those to whom they are applied.

It is further to be noted, that the work of regeneration which takes place confessedly in the soul of man, is called by inspired teachers a *resurrection*. "Therefore," says Paul, "we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the

¹ For ἵνα before a defining clause, see John vi. 29; iv. 34; 1 John iii. 11, 23; iv. 21; 2 John vi.

glory of the Father, even so we *also* should walk in *newness* of life.¹ And a little further on he uses this language : “Yield yourselves unto God as those that are *alive from the dead*.”² In another epistle he remarks, “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, did He quicken — or make alive — with Him ;”³ and, after a few verses, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above ;”⁴ adding, presently, that they had “put off the old man with his deeds, and had put on the new, renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”⁵ And, in yet another epistle, he says that “God, who is rich in mercy . . . hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and seated us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”⁶ From this class of passages we venture to conclude that the term “resurrection” is sometimes applied to the *soul*, and refers to the change effected by regeneration. But if the new birth is a *resurrection* of the soul *from the dead*, it is evident that the term death, when predicated of the soul, does not mean precisely

¹ Rom. vi. 4.³ Col. ii. 13.⁵ Col. iii. 10.² Rom. vi. 12.⁴ Col. iii. 1.⁶ Eph. ii. 4, 6.

the same as it does when used of the body. As a predicate, its meaning is modified by the nature of its subject.

It should also be borne in mind that several other terms are so applied to believers in the New Testament as to confirm our explanation of the words "life," "eternal life," and "resurrection," when predicated in the present tense of genuine Christians. They are said to be "begotten again," "begotten from above," to be "the workmanship of God, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works."

These expressions characterize believers as those who have been made new by the spirit of God. Their personal identity remains undisturbed, their conscious existence flows on without interruption, their mental and moral faculties are still the same; yet all things have become new; unreason has given place to reason, spiritual blindness to insight, unbelief to trust, selfishness to love, alienation from God to fellowship with him; the spirit has been purified and established in harmony and peace and God; gales from heaven breathe upon it, divine influences pervade it, angels of light minister unto it, and God circumfuses and fills it with his presence. This is the normal and proper life of a

rational being. Hence the beloved disciple could say, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men;" for spiritual life, light, and blessedness are almost equivalent terms. Hence, also, the new condition of the believer — the light, and love, and trust of his soul, are said to be formed, created, begotten, by the Father of Spirits. Hence, too, our final reply to the objection, which was named on a previous page, to our inference from Paul's language in the 15th of Corinthians. And hence, lastly, a justification of the view which we have taken of death, the penalty of sin.

To recapitulate: We have found reason to believe (1) that the soul of man was made originally *incorruptible*, and his body *corruptible*; (2) that the penal results of sin, which are expressed by the term death, were provided for in the original constitution of both soul and body; (3) that these results consisted of suffering and loss, the soul experiencing the evils which attend and follow moral darkness and separation from God, and the body those which accompany the process of dissolution; (4) that the *all-comprehending penalty* of sin was, however, the ruin and misery of the soul, the dissolution of the body

being no more than the attending satellite of the great and central evil ; and (5) that the death of the soul took place immediately after the fall, being a state of misery which naturally and normally culminates in eternal woe.

SECTION III.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

PROOF OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE—(1) FROM THE WORDS OF CHRIST; (2) FROM THE WORDS OF PETER; (3) FROM THE WORDS OF PAUL; (4) FROM THE WORDS OF CHRIST.—OBJECTIONS TO THIS—(1) FROM SCRIPTURE; AND (2) FROM REASON.

HAVING learned from the word of God that death, the penalty of sin, falls chiefly upon the soul, and consists, for the present, in separation from God rather than extinction of conscious being, we must now carry forward our investigation to the state of unbelievers during the period which elapses between the dying and the rising again of the body. The Scriptures teach, as we believe, that the souls of impenitent men continue still, in the transitional state to be conscious and miserable; and it will be our duty in the present section to exhibit, partially at least, their testimony on this point.

In our Lord's account of the rich man and Lazarus, it is said: "And it came to pass that

the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died and was buried; and in hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," etc.¹ The limits assigned to the present essay do not permit us to review and estimate in detail the various hypotheses which have been made respecting the import of this passage; but the result of a somewhat careful survey is simply this: that the most obvious meaning of Christ's language is its real meaning; that no amount of ingenuity, no keenness of spiritual vision, can discover any occult sense in this language, or dissipate the impression which it makes at once upon a thoughtful mind. Says Dr. Whately of the passage: "It seems to imply, indeed, very plainly, that there is a future state of rewards and punishments, . . . and also that those who have been devoted to the good things and enjoyments of this world will have no share in those of the world to come, and will regret, when it is too late, their not having 'laid up for themselves treasure in heaven.'"² Very true; but is this all? We think not. If it teaches so much, it teaches still more; it endorses the well-known doctrine of the Pharisees as to the conscious

¹ Luke xvi. 19-31.

² Whately's *Future State*, p. 57.

existence of human souls after death, making no distinction at this point between the righteous and the wicked. Nor is the testimony of our Saviour weakened by supposing his words to be a parable; for the dialogue between Dives and Abraham, the positive misery of the former and the implied blessedness of the latter, are too prominent features of the supposed parable to be reckoned mere drapery without any special significance. It will not be extravagant to assert, on the strength of this parable, that previous to the final day the impenitent dead are fully conscious, are in a state of suffering, are beyond the reach of help, and have no valid plea to offer against the justice of their doom. For, according to the representation of Christ, the rich man had brothers living upon earth; he was able to converse with Abraham; he spoke of being "tormented in this flame;" and his seeming reflection upon the goodness of God was repelled by the significant words: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."¹

¹ We would here call attention to an excellent article on "The Place and Condition of the Departed," by Prof. Griffin, in the *Bib. Sac.* vol. XIII. p. 153, sq.; to an article on "The Intermediate State," in the *Chr. Rev.* vol. XX. p. 381, sq.; to an article on "The Intermediate State and the Punishment of the Wicked," in the

To destroy the force of this passage, great stress has sometimes been laid upon the fact that both the rich man and Abraham are represented as having bodies, which is quite inconsistent with a proper idea of the intermediate state. But it may well be doubted, whether they are represented as having bodies in any other way than God is said to have hands and feet, and nearly all the members of a human body. If, however, they were, this could hardly, with our limited knowledge of the future life, be pronounced inconsistent with the proper idea of an intermediate state. "If, when parts of the body are removed, we still believe that we possess those limbs, and feel pain in them, why may not the disembodied spirit still subjectively exist in, and feel the sensations of, that corporeal system from which it is temporarily separated?"¹ And besides, it may be questioned, whether those who assume the existence of the human soul, or of any created intelligence, apart from a material organ, as simple spirit like God, do not go beyond the record. It certainly behoves

Meth. Rev. vol. XXXIV. p. 240, sq.; to Hertzog's "Real-Encyclopædie für prot. Theologie und Kirche," Bd. V. s. v. Hades; and to Prof. Stuart's "Essays on Future Punishment," p. 76, sq.

¹ Alford, *sub loco*. See, on this passage, the commentaries of Calvin, De Wette, Meyer, Bengel, and Ripley.

every man to speculate with great caution on a matter which is not distinctly treated in the word of God, and which lies altogether beyond the range of our experience in this life.

Turning now to the language of Peter, we obtain additional evidence that unbelievers are conscious during the intermediate state. He speaks of Christ as "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; in which also he went and preached to the *spirits in prison*" — *ἐν φυλακῇ*. To pass over the questions still in litigation respecting the import of this text, we believe all the best interpreters agree in holding the spirits here mentioned to be the souls of departed men, probably the souls of those who perished in the Noachian deluge. Now it seems to us scarcely less than absurd to speak of unconscious spirits as under guard, in prison. Nothing short of an express declaration, made by an inspired teacher, that a state of profound unconsciousness was itself the prison in which they were guarded, would seem to justify such an exposition.

But we are not restricted in this part of our essay to those passages which speak of the impenitent dead; for it is commonly admitted that both the righteous and the wicked are conscious,

or both unconscious, between death and the resurrection. Hence every expression of the Scriptures, which proves the consciousness of believers during the period in question, proves that of unbelievers also.

Let us then consider the words of Paul in his second epistle to the Corinthians: "Being confident then always, and knowing that while at home in the body we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, and not by sight; we are confident, I say, and are well pleased rather to *migrate out of the body*, and to *dwell at home with the Lord*." ¹ The apostle had already, in a previous verse, expressed his desire to be clothed upon with a celestial body. And he goes on to say, in the verses cited by us, that even though he should not be permitted to enter at once, after death, upon the blessedness of the final state in his glorified body, he was nevertheless well pleased to leave this present body, and dwell at home with the Lord. And it is certain that unconscious existence, or virtual non-existence, would not have been described by Paul as a dwelling with the Lord — ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον. Alford, who thinks the second coming of Christ was anticipated by Paul as possible in

¹ 2 Cor. v. 6-8.

his own day, paraphrases thus : “ Even if a dissolution of the body be imminent, — even that, though not according to our wish, does not destroy our confidence ; for so sensible are we that dwelling in the body is a state of banishment from the Lord, that we prefer to it even the alternative of dissolution, bringing us, as it will, into his presence.” If the apostle preferred a state of absolute unconsciousness to life in this world, merely because he would have no sense of the lapse of ages, but would seem instantly to awake with Christ, he plainly disregarded his own best good and the best good of mankind. For, “ by continuing in life, he would have made further proficiency in the Christian life, would have done more for the honor of God, and for the kingdom of Christ, and therefore would have been entitled by promise, to a greater degree of happiness in the resurrection state ; and this greater degree of happiness would have been extended to all eternity. So that, in reality, the apostle would have been an infinite loser by death at that time. He would have lost a certain degree of happiness, doubtless equal to the whole heavenly happiness of some saints ; and this degree of happiness, running through eternity, would be a sum of happi-

ness as truly infinite as the whole eternal happiness of some real saints. As, therefore, those saints, by the loss of their whole heavenly happiness, would sustain an infinite loss, so would the apostle, if he had lost that additional degree of happiness to which he would have been entitled by his continued life and usefulness. We can make nothing of this text but upon the supposition that his soul died not, or did not fall into a torpor with his body.”¹ And, again, his removal by death would put an end to his direct efforts for the good of the church. Bands of Christians, looking to him for counsel and encouragement, had been formed in various parts of the Roman Empire; and never were his personal services more necessary to their establishment in truth and spiritual progress, than when he was writing this very epistle. Yet, according to the hypothesis of unconsciousness during the intermediate state, the magnanimous apostle was quite willing to leave these lambs, which had been entrusted by the Great Shepherd to his care, for the sake of *seeming* to be sooner with the Lord! nothing more.

And this remark bears the mind away to another passage in the writings of Paul, where

¹ Works of Edwards the Younger, vol. II. p. 530.

he distinctly recognizes the value of his presence to the churches. Writing to the Philippians, he uses these words: "Because for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh — if this is to me the fruit of labor, — then what I should choose I know not. Now I am perplexed by the two, having the desire to depart and to be with Christ, for it is much more than better; but to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."¹ In his manuscript notes upon the epistle to the Philippians, Professor Hackett says of the word ἀναλῦσαι (*to depart*): "It is strictly a nautical term, meaning 'to cast loose,' to 'weigh anchor,' in order to put to sea." The manner in which σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι follows this term, would lead us to suppose that the apostle regarded the one event as immediately subsequent to the other. It is not easy to see how he could have expressed himself in a way more inevitably suggesting that idea, than the one which he has adopted here. Had he believed that an interval of unconsciousness was to elapse after death before the soul was to be present with Christ, would he not be likely, in such a connection, to have intimated that belief, or at least to have avoided language

¹ Phil. i. 21-24.

so liable to mislead the reader? And on the whole passage he makes the following remarks: "It may be well to notice here the nature of the struggle in Paul's mind, between his desire to depart and be with Christ, and his anxiety to labor for the spiritual welfare of men. It is difficult to see how he could have experienced any such struggle, unless he believed that death, which released him from the toils of this life, was to introduce him at once to the presence of Christ and the bliss of heaven.

"On the supposition that he expected after death to remain, for an indefinite time, unconscious in the grave until the resurrection, how, with his characteristic zeal for the salvation of men, and his contempt of trials and dangers in the pursuit of that object, could he have hesitated for a moment to wish to live as long as possible, since the longer he lived the more he would be able to accomplish for the cause of the Redeemer, and since he could gain nothing of a permanent nature by an earlier death which he would regard as worthy of a moment's comparison with the value of his labors to his fellow-men? On the contrary, if we suppose that he regarded his attainment of the rewards and the joys of heaven as simultaneous with his

departure from life, we have then a natural explanation of his perplexity. He might well desire that a consummation fraught with such gain to himself personally might arrive soon, and feel that nothing could reconcile him to the idea of remaining longer absent from Christ, except the importance of his ministry in preparing others for the same glorious destination."

To the testimony of Paul may be added the language of Christ himself. When one of the robbers who were crucified with him offered the prayer, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom," the Saviour replied, "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."¹ Comment on this declaration seems to be almost superfluous. To suppose that Christ, in reply to such a petition, merely reminded the dying robber that they were both to pass that very day from the land of the living into a state of total unconsciousness, of virtual non-existence, is most unreasonable. We can hardly divine the process by which any one can be led to endorse such a view. Moreover, the primary sense of the word paradise, namely, a "park" or "pleasure-garden," and the use of this term by Josephus, by

¹ Luke xxiii. 43.

the Seventy, by Paul, and by John, are utterly inconsistent with such a view of our passage. Indeed, it is quite certain from the language of Christ, that the believing robber was to enter, that very day, immediately after death, upon a state of conscious blessedness in the presence of Christ. Dr. Whately appears to concede this, but undertakes to destroy the value of this concession by suggesting that, by reason of his extraordinary faith and the peculiar time of his death, the converted robber was permitted to anticipate the resurrection.¹ With similar ingenuity he advances the suggestion, that Moses did not actually die, but was translated, like Enoch and Elijah. But these conjectures seem to be unsupported either by reason or by the word of God, and are advanced, it is not severe to say, for no other purpose than to save a doctrine which is not, we suppose, taught in the New Testament.²

“If, however, it be said the meaning is, that, as the thief would be conscious of nothing between death and the resurrection, his being with Christ at the resurrection would seem to him to have

¹ *Future State*, p. 61 sq.; 247 sq.

² In addition to the passages considered above, see also *Matt.* xvii. 3; cf. *Mark* ix. 9; and *Rev.* vi. 9-11.

been the same day on which he died, or immediately after his death, I answer, this would be to talk without example, and in a manner not intelligible to mankind in general. Would it not be unintelligible, and without example, to tell a man who had been a whole day in a sound sleep, and who was wholly ignorant of the time which had elapsed during his sleep, that it was but a minute since he had fallen into sleep? Or would there be any propriety or truth in saying, that Lazarus, who lay dead four days, was raised on the same day, and even immediately after his death? Not an instance of such language can be found in all the Scriptures, nor in any approved uninspired author. Yet this would have been just as true and proper, on the ground of this objection, as our Lord's telling the thief on the cross, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' Lazarus, on the hypothesis now under consideration, would no more have perceived any time between his death and resurrection, than the thief would have perceived time between his death and the general resurrection." ¹

But a plausible objection to the view now presented has been drawn from Christ's language

¹ Edwards' Works (the younger), vol. II. p. 531.

to the Sadducees: "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."¹ Dobney remarks on this language: "Observe, the question just then opened was *not* concerning *the separate and conscious existence of the soul after death*; and, therefore, it was not to prove this that he showed that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had not utterly ceased to be. His argument, to be satisfactory against that particular class of objectors before him and demonstrative of the point he had undertaken to prove, shows the living again, which he predicted, to be dependent on a resurrection. To deduce from the title God had assumed, that, therefore, since he is not the God of the dead but of the living, the patriarchs were still existent, in a separate state, would not have met the case at all, *unless the living after death be itself the resurrection*. His argument, strictly logical when correctly stated, is this: As God is not the God of the dead, of those who have finally and forever ceased to be,

¹ Matt. xxii. 31, 32; Cf. Luke xxi. 33.

there must be a resurrection of those of whom he calls himself the God."¹

The Sadducees, it will be remembered, held that "there is no resurrection, nor angel or spirit;"² and that "the souls of men perish with their bodies."³ It was a central dogma of their system, that man is entirely dependent on bodily organization for conscious existence; so that when the corporeal frame is dissolved by death, he really ceases to be. And, according to Mr. Dobney, this was also the doctrine of our Saviour; otherwise his statement, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush," was a mistake, and his reasoning fallacious. But we cannot see that he has made good this position. For it must be borne in mind that the doctrines of a separate existence of the soul after death, and of a future resurrection, were always united in the Jewish mind; that the Pharisees and Essenes affirmed both these doctrines, while the Sadducees denied them both; that Christ and his apostles are nowhere in the New Testament represented as agreeing with the Sadducees, even in part, and that the

¹ "The Scripture Doctrine of Future Punishment," etc., by H. H. Dobney, p. 154.

² Acts xxiii. 8.

³ Josephus Antiq. xviii. 1-5.

only alternative allowed by our passage is, that the patriarchs were pronounced "*alive*," either because, though *actually and completely dead*, they had not *finally* ceased to be, since God would raise them into life hereafter, or because they were *truly alive* and conscious, but not in their full, complex nature — which fact was really a divine prediction and assurance of the resurrection — and, bearing this in mind, it will surely be easy for any fair investigator to decide in favor of the latter as the only just view of Christ's language. And if this decision be accepted, how characteristic and profound was the answer of Jesus! His argument was far deeper and more comprehensive than the single point brought forward by his adversaries required. He replied to the Sadducees as a judge, rather than as a lawyer. He proved their system to be rotten at the core. From a passage which no mere logician would have pronounced relevant to the question at issue, he drew a conclusion which destroyed their whole system, root and branch.

To present the matter in another form: The Sadducees assailed the whole doctrine of a future life, whether in the body or out of the body, by assailing the doctrine of the resurrection,

for the latter doctrine was an integral part of the former. To use the words of a friend, it was tacitly assumed by them and by Christ, "That there is such a connection between the resurrection of the body and the spiritual existence of men between death and the resurrection, that any proof of the one, is *pari passu* a proof of the other."¹ Our Saviour, therefore, first answered their cavil against the resurrection of the body, by correcting their gross and false idea of a "spiritual" body, and then proved out of the Scriptures the conscious existence of Moses and the patriarchs long after their decease, which fact was a prophecy and pledge, and valid proof of the resurrection.²

Further, the dead are spoken of as those

¹ Rev. J. T. Smith, of Amherst, Mass.

² See also the Commentaries, especially those of Meyer, De Wette, Alford, and Bengel. Says Schöttgen ad Matt. xxii. 32, "*Nervus hujus argumentationis Christi a Theologis nostris probe perspectus est. DEUM ENIM ALICUJUS ESSE notat in fœdere cum ipso versari. Sic in V. T. Deus tantum erat Israelitarum Deus, in N. T. etiam gentilium. Roman. iii. 29, hoc est, olim cum solis Judæis fœdus habebat, jam vero cum omnibus nationibus in toto terrarum orbe. Jam Deus se Deum Abrahami, Isaaci, et Jacobi dicit, longo intervallo post mortem ipsorum, h. e. fatebatur, se adhuc in fœdere cum ipsis versari, necesse erat igitur, ut tunc temporis adhuc in viris essent, respectu scil. ad animam habito. QUIA VERO ANIMA ABRAHAMI NON EST TOTUS ABRAHAMUS, SED TANTUM PARS IPSIUS, SUPEREST, UT ETIAM CORPUS SPEM HABEAT REVIVISCENDI, et veritas hæc verborum divinorum inconculsa maneat. Hoc est argumentum Christi pro resurrectione mortuorum.*"

“that sleep in the dust of the earth,” and *sleep*, it is urged, involves unconsciousness. On this objection we remark, first, that men who believe in the consciousness of the soul after death, have been wont for ages to speak of dying as falling asleep, and of the dead as those who have fallen asleep, without perceiving any absurdity or incongruity in their language. This fact alone is a full reply to the objection; for Christ and his apostles used not the language of philosophy, but of common life. And, secondly, that sleep and death resemble each other; not, however, because the soul is unconscious in either, but because the bodily senses are closed, the windows by which the spirit looks forth upon the world, the avenues by which the world approaches it, the mysterious arches which in this life span the gulf between mind and matter, are all gone or impassible; so that if the mind is active, as in dreaming, this action is unrestrained by the real condition of the external world, by the true relations of the dreamer to material objects. Hence the exceeding difficulty often times of recalling the action of sleep, when the senses are refreshed and revived and reopened. The truth seems to be this: that the spirit is ever active, though in different states of

consciousness, which may or may not be connected here. Even Dr. Whately admits that the mind probably does not cease to think in the profoundest sleep. It is, therefore, we have good reason to believe, the body alone which truly rests in sleep; it is the senses, the nerves, the organs of the soul for this present life in connection with the world, which are directly concerned in slumber; and so it is in death. The body sleeps in the dust of the earth until the last day; but the soul is not there; it has passed into a different sphere of action and consciousness.¹

The fact also may be worthy of attention, that only "the dead in Christ" are said by New Testament writers to be asleep. And from this usage of our Saviour and his apostles it may be right to infer that the dead are described in the book of Daniel as those "that sleep in the dust of the earth," because the righteous were first and prominently in the speaker's mind. This view is favored by the context. And if it be correct, we are only to inquire why the *penitent* dead are spoken of as being asleep. And the answer may be this: They have passed from a

¹ See a luminous discussion of "Consciousness," in Sir Wm. Hamilton's "Lectures on Metaphysics." Lec's XI. to XIX., especially Lec. XVII.

state of wearisome toil and conflict to one of sweet repose, which, again, is to be followed by a more active and blessed life.

And, finally, a general judgment is foretold in the Scriptures, and this is pronounced inconsistent with the doctrine of human consciousness between death and the resurrection. Such a statement we are not required to answer; for we are by no means competent to explain the ways of God. As the heavens are high above the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts. We are content to abide by the testimony of his word. Still, it may be remarked, that a ruler might certainly for wise reasons defer indefinitely the trial of a criminal whose guilt was certain, whose custody was sure, and whose hope of ultimate acquittal was nearly or quite taken away; and so also God, for aught we can see, may properly reserve the wicked for a final and solemn adjudication, not to assure them of their guilt and condemnation, but to exhibit before all finite beings the ground of his decision and the righteousness of his administration. We can imagine no better way for him to take in making himself and his glory known. It seems to us eminently suited to the proper conduct of a moral government, perfectly adapted

to complete the revelation of the divine character, as concerned in the origin and final destiny of our race. And even should it prove that the wicked do not come to a full knowledge and sense of their guilt on the one hand, and to an absolute assurance of their hopeless ruin on the other, until the last judgment, we do not see how this could affect materially the question at issue.¹ No party would be wronged; the guilty would be treated as such, though perhaps cheating themselves still with the faint hope of deliverance, and the righteous would be treated as such, though not perhaps enjoying all the assurance and blessedness of their final state.

We have never seen any other even plausible objection, drawn from the word of God, to the consciousness of departed spirits in the intermediate state, and therefore submit the following as our conclusion from the teaching of Scripture, namely: That unbelievers, as well as believers, will be fully conscious from the time of their physical death until the resurrection. And it need scarcely be remarked, after considering the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that the former are in a state of misery, and the latter in a state of blessedness.

¹ Cf. Matt. vii. 22, and xxv. 44.

SECTION IV.

THE FINAL STATE.

EXTRACTS FROM JOSEPHUS AND TACITUS.—TESTIMONY OF CHRIST AFTER HIS ASCENSION.—HIS TESTIMONY WHILE YET ON EARTH.—REPLY TO ANOTHER INTERPRETATION OF HIS LANGUAGE.

IN the last section we had occasion to mention the well-known doctrine of the Pharisees as to the conscious existence of souls after death. Before adducing the testimony of Scripture in respect to the final state of unbelievers, it may be well to lay before our readers the account which Josephus, a contemporary of the apostles, gives of the doctrine held by Pharisees and Essenes on the point to be examined. Their opinions are of no weight *per se*; yet a knowledge of them may put us in the position of those who listened to Christ, and may thus enable us the better to understand his teaching. In so far as he appropriated, without explanation, the language of any large class of his hearers, when alluding to the condition of men beyond the grave, he

thereby and to that extent endorsed their belief as correct. This will readily be admitted by all who recognize his authority as a religious teacher, and with such only are we at present concerned. If any are prepared to assume that Christ had no certain doctrines to express, no well-defined and reliable truths to utter in the ears of a lost race, for them all aids to interpretation derived from the use of language by the Jews may be superfluous; the pictures and visions of a poet and seer¹ may be comprehended at once by the "poet's eye," or "faculty divine," but for others the help of history and philology will ever be necessary.

According to the testimony of Josephus, the Pharisees held "that all souls are incorruptible, but the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies, while the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment."² Again: they "believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards and punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an

¹ We refer to the discourse of Rev. T. S. King, entitled, "The Doctrine of eternal Punishment unchristian."

² Wars of the Jews, II. 8, 14.

everlasting prison, but the former shall have power to revive and live again. . . . But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: That souls die with the bodies," etc.¹ And, in another place: "Smiling in their agonies, and deriding the efforts of their persecutors, they cheerfully resigned their souls, assured of receiving them again. For the opinion obtains among them, that bodies indeed are corruptible, and the matter of them not permanent, but that souls continue exempt from death forever: and that, emanating from the most subtle ether, they are enfolded in bodies, as prisons, to which they are drawn by some natural spell. But when loosed from the bonds of the flesh, as if released from a long captivity, they rejoice, and are borne upward. In this opinion, harmonizing with the sons of Greece, they maintain that virtuous souls have their habitation beyond the ocean, in a region oppressed neither with rains, nor snows, nor heats, but which the ever-gentle zephyr refreshes, breathing from the wave, while to the bad they allot a gloomy and tempestuous cavern, full of never-ending punishments.

"According to the same notion, the Greeks seem to me to apportion to the brave, whom they style

¹ Antiquities, XVIII. 1, 5.

heroes and demi-gods, the islands of the blessed ; but to the souls of the wicked, the place of the impious in hades, where their legends tell that certain persons are punished, as Sisyphus, and Tantalus, and Ixion, and Tityus, laying it down, first, that souls are immortal, and deriving from thence their exhortations to virtue, and their dissuasives from vice. For the good become better in this life by the hope of a reward even after death, and the impetuous passions of the evil are restrained by the fear, that, though they may escape detection while alive, they will, after dissolution, undergo a deathless punishment. Such are the theological views of the Essenes concerning the soul—an irresistible attraction to those who have once tasted their philosophy.”¹

Moreover, Tacitus affirms of the Jews that “they deem the souls of those who are cut off in battle or by the hand of the executioner to be eternal. Hence their desire for offspring, and their contempt of death. Dead bodies are buried, after the custom of Egypt, rather than burned; there is also the same solicitude, and the same belief in respect to the under-world.”²

¹ Jewish War (Traill's trans.), II. viii. 10, 11.

² “ANIMASQUE PRÆLIO, AUT SUPPLICIIS PEREMPTORUM ÆTERNAS putant. Hinc generandi amor, et moriendi contemptus. Corpora

With the light which these testimonies shed upon the belief prevalent among the Jews, at the time of Christ, in respect to a future life, let us turn to the word of God, and examine its language concerning the final state of unbelievers. In the last book of the New Testament we read: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also were the beast, and the false prophet, and *they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever* — βασιανισθησονται ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Here "the beast" must be understood to signify and represent real men, knit together in a body, controlled by a common purpose, and setting themselves as a great organized power in opposition to Christ — a monarchy, perhaps, yet not the less composed of actual men, because they are united together, and may be represented in the aggregate as a single power. Here, then, is no image of impersonal evil, — "for there is really no such thing as impersonal evil in the sense of moral evil," — no mere nominalistic idea set before us as a great beast, but a compact anti-christian organization, made up of individuals, and which can be

condere, quam cremare, e more Ægyptico; eademque cura, et de infernis persuasio," etc. (L. v. c. 5.)

in the "lake of fire" only as the individuals constituting it are there. A similar view is also to be taken of the "false prophet."

"And I saw," proceeds the Revelator, "a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne; and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of the things written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hades gave up the dead that were in them, and they were judged every one according to their works. And *death* and *hades* were cast into *the lake of fire*. *This is the second death, the lake of fire.*" On the last words of this passage Ebrard remarks: "If death and hades were cast into the lake of fire, and it is then said, 'This is the *second* death, the lake of fire,' the sense cannot be that death in the abstract is to be destroyed, so that henceforth there shall be no death any more; also, that hades has become superfluous as an abode, and therefore will be burned up like an old box. For death's annihilation cannot be a second death, and, besides, the second death is

a *punishment* for men,¹ not a means for the burning up of localities and instruments which have become superfluous. Still less can "death" and "hades" be two "demons" (as De Wette supposes), who were to be punished, because they had slain so many men; for in that case "the lake of fire" itself must also be punished! Death and hades are rather to be understood in the *concrete of the men who are found in them.*" To nearly the same effect says a writer in the Christian Review: "*Death* has no separate existence. Hades, indeed, may be a locality as well as a condition, and may, therefore, without incongruity, be represented as being cast into the lake of fire. But as this cannot be said of death, and as the two are so intimately united, it seems preferable to treat them alike. It is not said that the dead who were in death and hades were cast into the lake of fire, but simply that death and hades themselves were cast in. Is it not, then, perfectly legitimate to consider *death* and *hades* as standing for the dead who were in them, or, rather, the dead in whom they were?"² We cannot withhold our assent to this interpretation as the only natural and consistent one.

Passing now to the next chapter of the Apoc-

¹ Cf. ii. 11; and xx. 6.

² Chr. Rev. vol. XX. p. 397.

alypse, we read : “ But the fearful and unbelieving, and abominable, and *murderers*, and *whoremongers*, and *sorcerers*, and *idolaters*, and *all liars*, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death ;¹ and further on in the next chapter, “ Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are *dogs*, and *sorcerers*, and *whoremongers*, and *murderers*, and *idolaters*, and *whosoever loveth and maketh a lie*.”² Let it be observed in passing, that the same classes of men, with hardly an exception, are said, in the one case, to “ have part in the lake of fire,” and, in the other, to be “ without the city.” To these passages should be added, as referring in our judgment to the future doom of unbelievers, two verses in the fourteenth chapter of this book, namely, “ If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation : and he shall be tormented — βασιανισθήσεται — with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb ;

¹ Rev. xxi. 8.

² Rev. xxii. 15.

and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night," etc.¹ Well has Bengel said of this language, "*Una omnium horrendissima in tota Scriptura est hæcce comminatio. Pellit timorem ab interfectoribus corporis timor ab Eo, qui potest et animam et corpus perimere.*"²

On these portions of the sacred record we submit the following remarks: First, the second death, which awaits all whose names are not written in the book of life, is denominated the lake of fire. This death seems also to be referred to as consisting, in part, of exclusion from the holy city and association with the vile and abandoned. Briefly, it involves extreme suffering and infinite loss. Secondly, the lake of fire, called also the second death, is a designation of the final state or abode of Satan and his angels. If, then, the testimony of this apocalyptic seer is worthy of confidence, wicked men are to be associated in their final state with the great adversary—a fact of dreadful omen in itself. Thirdly, the sufferings of Satan are to be without end. Together with the beast and the false prophet,

¹ Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

² See also the commentaries of Hengstenberg, Ebrard, and Stuart, on this passage.

he is to be "tormented day and night forever and ever." The Greek words in this clause are perfectly unequivocal. The idea of eternity is expressed with all the plainness with which the most perfect language ever spoken could give it; and we are unacquainted with any form of speech that would more surely convey to a mind familiar with the Greek tongue the idea of conscious suffering than the one here chosen. To attempt any modification of the *prima facie* import of such language seems to us a perilous tampering with the word of God. We rejoice, therefore, to find that Dobney, one of the ablest as well as fairest defenders of annihilation, hesitates to deny the eternal misery of Satan.¹ Fourthly, the misery of lost men must therefore be pronounced in like manner endless. For their doom is described by the same figurative language as that of Satan. Many of them, indeed, are designated by the terms "beast" and "false prophet," who are to be tormented, it is explicitly said, forever and ever. And from the passage in chapter fourteenth we learn the doom of all who worship the beast and his image; "the smoke of his torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night," etc.

¹ Scripture Doctrine of Future Punishment, p. 231 sq.

We can but think the expressions cited above shut us up to the doctrine, that death, the penalty of sin, does not consist in the extinction of conscious being, but in the extinction of conscious well-being. Dissolution belongs to the corruptible body, "the earthly house of this tabernacle," but not to the spirit or to its resurrection body.

Let us hear now the words of Christ while yet on earth. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew he portrays the general judgment. We quote two verses from this sublime description: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*" "And these shall go away into *eternal punishment*, but the righteous into *life eternal.*"¹ How perfectly does this language coincide with that in the Apocalypse! The abode of lost men is also Satan's home, and is called everlasting fire and punishment. To resolve all this into a flame-picture addressed to the imagination, is to give up the science of exegesis, and make the word of God teach whatever the student chooses to have it. Says De Wette, the *rationalist*: "Evil and its punishment have in the Father, the absolute God, and in his *eternal purpose*, no ground, but are a

¹ Matt. xxv. 41, 46.

human work, although guided and controlled of God. . . . The punishment of hell, which is conditioned by sin, cannot be eternal. See, however, the opposite view, as maintained by the Rabbins, in Wetstein. The eternity of this punishment lies, indeed, in the verbal sense—*Wortsinne*;—but yet it is to be remarked that the term *fire* is to be taken figuratively, and the word αἰώνιον not with *metaphysical strictness*; that the idea of the eternal is irreconcilable with that of evil and its punishment, and that the object of this *warning* representation is not to give information respecting the eternal nature of things, but to depict visibly the idea of the judgment, that is, the removal of the conflict between good and evil in the kingdom of God, by setting aside evil.”

This evidently is not interpretation, but speculation; its basis is philosophy, and not the word of God. Meyer's note, on the other hand, seems to us full of truth: “The absolute idea of *eternity*, in respect to the punishment of hell, is not to be set aside by an appeal to the popular use of αἰώνιον, nor by an appeal to the figurative term *fire* and to the *inconsistency* between the idea of the eternal and that of evil and its punishment, together with the *warning* object

of the description ; but it stands fast exegetically by reason of the contrasted *ζωὴν αἰώνιον* which signifies the endless Messianic life."

With the passages already adduced may be compared the following: "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."¹ "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."² "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."³ "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and shall sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."⁴ "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness:

¹ Mark ix. 47, 48.

² Matt. viii. 11 12.

³ Matt. xiii. 41, 42.

⁴ Matt. xiii. 49, 50.

there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”¹ “But he shall say, I tell you I know you not whence ye are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves cast out.”²

It will be observed by the careful reader that the final abode of the ungodly is variously represented by Christ. He speaks of their being cast into a “furnace of fire,” or “unquenchable fire,” into “outer darkness,” or simply “out of the kingdom of God.” But the effect is always the same; nowhere destruction of consciousness, everywhere misery, “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” While we have no more right to presume that unbelievers will be immersed in the element of fire hereafter than we have to conclude that literal darkness, or an actual worm that never dies, will be the source of their anguish, we are authorized, and indeed required, to believe that their condition will be one of intense woe.

Yet this doctrine has been of late assailed, and the opinion has been advanced, that fire is not an emblem of torment, but of destruction,

¹ Matt. xxv. 30.

² Luke xiii. 27, 28.

and, hence, that all the passages cited above point us rather to the extinction of personal existence than to a state of penal suffering. Several instances may, no doubt, be produced from the word of God which seem at first sight to favor this opinion. But if we narrowly examine those expressions which set forth the future condition of unbelievers, it will be found, we suppose, wholly untenable. For (1) the wicked are said to be in torment. This fact is almost always indicated, as if it were the characteristic feature of their condition. Now if fire were in these passages an emblem of destruction, the accompanying terms would be almost certain to adjust themselves to this leading idea, and thus place it in the foreground. If virtual annihilation is to be *the punishment* of sin hereafter, and if this was meant to be symbolized by immersion in fire, it is strange that this fact does not appear, as the fact of suffering now does, at every turn in the language of Christ; it is strange that the rich man in hades is made to shrink from pain only, and not rather, above all, from destruction of consciousness, the real penalty of sin, the culminating point of his doom. But if the termination of personal being is *not* in reality *the punishment* of sin, but rather the

end of punishment, the coveted *release* from it, then surely this virtual annihilation cannot be "death," "the wages of sin," the penalty annexed to it from the beginning. Alas! when we read that Dives after death lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and said, also, I am tormented in this flame, that Satan and his angels are to be tormented in the lake of fire, which is the second death, and that unbelievers are sentenced with appalling precision of language to the same state, it is but too certain that fire is here employed to symbolize a source of suffering, instead of non-existence. And (2) the impenitent dead are said to be in protracted, endless woe. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to express the idea of endless misery more unequivocally than it is given in several passages to which we have referred. To transcribe again language so inexpressibly solemn and fearful seems to be unnecessary. Let the reader who feels any doubt at this point turn back and examine once more the testimony for himself. But how long does fire, as a destroying agent, spare its victim? How many hours, or even minutes, would a human being survive in a flame so intense as to be called, for that reason, unquenchable? In a previous section we have shown that human

souls are conscious during the interim between bodily death and resurrection. But for many of our race, how long must this period be! Who can measure the interval which connects the fratricide of Cain with the sound of the last trumpet! Yet, according to our Saviour's account of "the rich man," the lost in hades survive what is signified by the action of fire, until the last judgment; and if they endure it for so long a time, there is no reason to believe it will ever put an end to their personal existence. Think of the wicked as being exposed after death to some power which destroys them, as fire burns up the chaff, and what becomes of Christ's language, "For all are alive to him,"¹ and again, through the Revelator, "They shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."² Its appropriateness and significance disappear at once, and we are compelled to wonder at his use of language.

And (3) the impenitent dead are described as being in "outer darkness," "without the city," and "without the kingdom of God." But darkness, however thick and terrible, is by no means, according to the popular belief and *usus loquendi*, a destructive energy. It is rather suggestive of gloom, terror, helplessness and desertion, than

¹ Luke xx. 38.

² Rev. xx. 10.

of extinction of being. Much more is this true of the other expressions. To be excluded from the holy city or the kingdom of God is simply equivalent to being fixed irrevocably in a state of spiritual death, the state in which unbelievers now exist. For these reasons, in brief, we must reject the opinion that fire is spoken of in connection with the impenitent dead as a symbol of destruction, and must adhere to the view obviously required in almost every case by the adjuncts and context, that it is a symbol of torment.

Our conclusion, then, is this: That the conscious existence of unbelievers will have no end.¹ Those who reject Christ are destined to survive the rolling together of the heavens as a scroll, and the melting of the elements with fervent heat,—are destined to survive the searchings and terrors of the last day, when they will be ready to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for

¹ It has not been deemed necessary to examine afresh, as if the matter were unsettled, the import of *αἰώνιος* and the phrases which signify eternal. See, however, Stuart's "Essays on Future Punishment," p. 5, sq.; Meth. Rev. vol. XXXIV. p. 257, sq.; "Immortality: The Argument from Scripture," by Rev. T. M. Post, D.D.; New Englander, vol. XIV. p. 161, sq.—a manly and powerful discussion; Ellicott on 2 Thess. i. 9; Ebrard on Rev. xx. 10; and the commentators generally on the passages noticed in this essay.

the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? — are destined to survive their flight into the outer darkness, where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth, their descent into the bottomless pit, where they will have no rest day nor night; and are destined, in this abode of outer darkness, to suffer, with all the foes of God, “eternal punishment.” This, according to the Scriptures, to which we must add nothing, from which we must subtract nothing, will be their dreadful but righteous doom. This is the second death. O that all who read these pages may be delivered from it by accepting the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord! And may God in his tender mercy give us grace to believe on his Son before the day of our trial is past, and our doom assigned us with hypocrites and unbelievers!

SECTION V.

BIBLICAL OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

- (1) "DEATH," THE EXTINCTION OF CONSCIOUS BEING.—THEORY OF HAM.—THEORY OF HUDSON.—(2) "DESTRUCTION," THE EXTINCTION OF CONSCIOUS BEING.—SUPPORTS OF THIS VIEW.—OBJECTIONS TO IT.

AGAINST the doctrine now presented, several objections have been raised, some of which deserve our careful attention. It is our purpose to examine in this section the most considerable of those which are drawn professedly from the word of God. And,—

I. *The penalty of sin, the final doom of unbelievers, is frequently called death; but death is an event which puts an end to conscious existence.* The whole matter turns of course upon the proper definition of the term "*death*." In support of the definition here given, we are reminded that Adam must have looked upon death as the extinction of conscious being, and hence that he was *not fairly treated*, if it signified anything worse than this in the threatening, "Thou shalt

surely die." Says Mr. Hudson, "The advance of geological science has proved that animals had lived and died for thousands of years before the creation of man. Did Adam not know of their mortality, when he was told that he might die? And if he did, must he not understand by death just such an expiring and decay as he saw among the brutes around him? . . . Was he *fairly treated*, if that was only the prelude of death, and if, without a word of express warning, he was still liable to endless woe?"¹ Dobney expresses the same argument. "I submit," he says, "that Adam could never have understood the sentence to include what the popular belief finds in it, *unless the words had been so explained to him*; of which, as there is no account, so it may not be taken for granted in order to make out a theory. . . . There is nothing indeed on which it more behoves, or in fact so much behoves, that there should be perfect and transparent explicitness, as in a sentence denouncing evil in case of transgression. One who is in any danger of violating law ought to be able by due painstaking to understand the threatened consequences of voluntary ill-doing. It would *not be righteous* in a human lawgiver to threaten ten stripes and inflict a thousand, or to threaten

¹ Doctrine of a Future Life, p. 170.

a day's imprisonment and then commit to the galleys for life, or hand over to the executioner. This, amongst men, would be properly denounced as most *flagrant tyranny*. Let the man whom it is wished to deter from a criminal act know explicitly the full legal consequences of crime."¹

On the correctness of the position here taken, that the righteousness of a punishment depends upon the criminal's knowledge of it beforehand, or in other words, that it is the knowledge of *consequences*, and not the knowledge of *right* and *wrong* in conduct itself, which makes man responsible to God and deserving of reward or punishment, we shall have something to say in the sequel. For the present we simply remark, that neither science nor revelation assures us that Adam had observed the phenomena of death in the brute creation before the fall, and had thus been taught to regard this event as an extinction of being. There is perhaps no more reason to suppose that he had anything like a correct idea of physical death without divine instruction, than that he had a somewhat distinct idea of shame, remorse, and spiritual ruin by means of direct instruction from God. The narrative in Genesis suggests quite as readily the presence of Jehovah as the presence of death

¹ Scripture Doctrine of Future Punishment, p. 128.

in the garden, knowledge derived from communion with God as knowledge derived from the study of expiring animals.

In support of this view, it is also said that the soul of man is itself material, or at least dependent for its conscious existence upon material organization. And to prove this we are again reminded of Jehovah's language to Adam: "In the day thou eatest thereof, *thou* — not thy body — shalt surely die," and further along in the narrative, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." But here the original text does not permit us to emphasize the pronoun and paraphrase thus — *thou* as a *person*, a self-conscious being — *thou* as to the very centre and principle of thy rational nature — art from the dust, and shalt return to the same. No such thought can be fairly evoked from the passage. We are told, however, that other portions of the sacred record authorize us to find this meaning in the words of Jehovah to Adam. Let us look at one or two of these passages:—

And first we may look at the words of Balaam: "Let my soul die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," ¹ and then at those of Samson: "Let my soul die with the Philis-

¹ Num. xxiii. 10.

tines.”¹ Death, we are assured, is here predicated of the soul, and hence the soul is regarded as dying with the body. We have at least the opinion of Balaam and Samson that it comes to an end with its earthly house. But to this we may reply, that the expression, “my soul,” appears in both these cases to take the place of a pronoun, and differs from the latter, if at all, only by way of emphasis. Hence the common version is correct in sense, and nothing is here affirmed of the death of the soul *per se*. But should this use of the expression, “my soul,” be challenged, the frequent choice of the word, translated by us “soul” to signify merely the animal life, the *anima*, ψυχῆ, cannot be called in question for a moment, and this signification, be it observed, suits the design of each passage, and is selected for each by Gesenius.² Accordingly we say again that neither of these texts should be adduced to prove the death of the soul *per se*. The former suggests rather the idea of a life beyond the grave. For why, otherwise, should Balaam wish to die the death of the righteous? Was it because the wicked suffer more pain *in articulo mortis* than the righteous? Such an

¹ Jud. xvi. 30.

² Cf. Ex. xxii. 23; 1 Kings xix. 3; with Odys. xix. 423.

hypothesis does not accord very well with the rapt condition of the seer, if, indeed, it be not too trivial a thought for any man who is anticipating the close of life. Or was it because he knew of the resurrection, the final judgment, and the second death, from the last of which he would fain be delivered to enjoy eternal life? This view is inconsistent with the acknowledged fact, that very few references are made in the Old Testament to the doctrine of a resurrection, while references to a future life are not infrequent. To us it is manifest that Balaam was looking forward to a conscious existence beyond the grave, depending for its blessedness or misery upon his character in this life.

It is needless to examine other passages of this class; for no one of them teaches that natural death involves the extinction of man's rational spirit or conscious being; while, on the other hand, the words of Christ, "Fear not them that kill the body," etc., prove beyond a reasonable doubt that it involves no such extinction.

Again we are told by Mr. Hudson, that all the passages which we have referred to spiritual death, together with the account in Genesis, lead naturally to a very different view, namely, that men are pronounced dead in these instances,

proleptically, or by way of anticipation, because they are as good as dead, are virtually dead, that is, are *sentenced* to death, and perhaps are even now in the process of dying. As illustrations of this figure of speech he cites a passage in Genesis: "But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold thou *art a dead man*, for the woman which thou hast taken;"¹ another in Exodus: "And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people that they might send them out of the land in haste: for they said, *We be all dead*;"² and another in Numbers: "And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, *Behold we die, we perish, we all perish.*"³

But these texts are by no means similar to the expression in Genesis which they are said to elucidate. For (1) the prolepsis is here quite self-evident. In each case the language plainly refers to natural death, and cannot be supposed to signify anything else. Yet those who are alive in the flesh are pronounced to be now dead or dying. Here the verb or participle is in the present tense, and a declaration is made which cannot even be imagined true, except by way of anticipation. That which is conceived

¹ Gen. xx. 33.² Ex. xii. 33.³ Num. xvii. 27.

of as certain, just at hand, and as good as done, is spoken of as now actually accomplished. How different is this from the deliberate prediction of an event which is to occur in the future ! How different from the same language when the context leads us to think of the moral rather than the physical nature of man ! And (2) the passages adduced by Mr. Hudson are preceded by narratives which prepare the reader for emphatic and impassioned language. From the circumstances related, he is led to expect the utterance of deep emotion, of severe indignation and frantic alarm, in words fitted to express not so much a historical fact as a feeling of the heart. But nothing of this can be imagined in Jehovah, when he forewarned Adam, yet sinless, of the sure and penal reward of transgression, nor in Paul when he reminded the Colossians that previous to conversion they "were dead in their sins and in the uncircumcision of their flesh." They speak with the deliberation and precision of a lawgiver and a historian, and there is no reason to assign a proleptical import to the language. But Mr. Hudson appeals with still greater confidence to the words of Pharaoh, "Get thee from me ; take heed to thyself ; see my face no more ; for *in that day thou seest my*

face, thou shalt die."¹ And to the words of Solomon, "Build thee an house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and go not forth thence anywhither; for it shall be that *on the day thou goest out*, and passeth over the brook Kedron, thou shalt know for certain *that thou shalt surely die.*"² Yet these passages, in our opinion, make against the view advocated by Mr. Hudson. For it cannot well be doubted that both Pharaoh and Solomon *meant to be understood* as threatening the death of Moses and of Shimei, respectively, on the very days indicated. The warning depended, no doubt, in a great measure, upon this circumstance for its force. There shall be no delay, no reprieve, but immediate death—this was the meaning of both these princes. Had Solomon passed a formal sentence of death upon Shimei, when the latter had returned from Gath, but deferred the execution of it ten, twenty, or forty years, no man would hesitate to ascribe this delay of execution to some change in the views or the feelings of the king—no man would pretend that he had done as he meant to do when he uttered the warning, or as he wished Shimei to understand him as resolved and pledged to do.

¹ Exod. x. 28.² 1 Kings ii. 36, 37.

We conclude, therefore, that Mr. Hudson has not justified his interpretation of the words in Genesis, "In the day of thy eating of it thou shalt surely die," by a single passage from the word of God, which does not refer to the question in debate, and hence we must either pronounce it untenable in philology, or assume that on this one theme, the penalty of sin, inspired writers use a figure of speech with great frequency in a quite extraordinary, and, indeed, unprecedented manner.

If, now, we reflect that the spirit of man was made originally incorruptible and fitted to exist forever ; that the fall did not result in a speedy termination of his conscious being, but rather in a moral separation from God, often called death, and that the terms "death" and "life" are sometimes used by the sacred writers to denote the opposite spiritual conditions of those equally alive in the flesh,—all presumption in favor of the annihilation of unbelievers, arising from the use of the word "death" to describe their final punishment, vanishes away. And if, moreover, this term, when applied in the Scriptures to the final state of unbelievers, is surrounded by adjuncts which naturally imply conscious existence, these adjuncts must be taken as full proof of

such existence; for there is nothing in the word "death" to impair their force. This has been already shown in a previous section. Yet it may be well to add, that if it is proper to say of a man who has lost his fellowship with sin and with a sinful world, that he is dead to sin,¹ or dead to the rudiments of the world,² it is equally proper and even more natural to describe one as dead unto God when he has lost all fellowship with him, and the faculties of his soul reason, conscience, affection have ceased to perform their noblest function, to unite him consciously with the Father of Spirits and make his existence truly normal and blessed. When we shall have attained such conceptions of life and death as are taught by a sound philosophy and by the word of God, these terms will no longer be confounded with "personal existence," or "non-existence."³

But we pass on to another objection, namely,—

II. The final doom of unbelievers is often called "*destruction*" or "*perdition*," in the New

¹ Rom. vi. 2. 6, 11.

² Col. ii. 20. See also iii. 3, where the word "dead" is to be understood in the same sense. Compare the learned and accurate commentary of Ellicott on these passages.

³ See the Meth. Rev., vol. XXXIV. p. 250 sq., for some discriminating remarks on this point.

*Testament; but the word*¹ *thus rendered in our version signifies the extinction of conscious being, that is, when applied to man or to any being possessed of consciousness. If the meaning here assigned to "destruction" and "perdition" be correct, this objection is valid and decisive; for we readily admit that wicked men are frequently threatened with destruction both in this world and in the world to come. But we do not find this definition sustained by the law and the testimony. It will, therefore, be suitable for us to examine briefly a few passages which are said to justify and even require it; and then several others may be noticed which seem to call for a different explanation. If we do not select those passages in the former case which are clearest for the objection, our failure to do so will spring from oversight or ignorance, not from design.*

Christ is represented by Matthew as saying, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."² It has already been observed that this verse distinguishes between body and soul, affirming that one may be killed without destroying the other.

¹ Ἀπολλυμι and its derivatives.

² Matt. x. 28.

And if we look at the parallel record made by Luke, it will be found to go still further, and imply that bodily death does not injure the soul: "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and *after that* have *no more* that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to *cast into hell*; yea, I say unto you, fear him."¹ Dr. Whately is unable to perceive any connection between these verses and the subject of the soul's consciousness after death.² To us the connection seems to be most obvious; for if men, by killing the body, extinguish the soul's consciousness until the resurrection, they do, to all intents and purposes, kill the soul no less than the body. For a soul *minus* consciousness is no more a human soul than a corpse without life is a human body. Consciousness organizes and holds together the faculties of the soul, as the principle of natural life does the elements of the body—the one is as necessary to personal being as the other is to animal existence. Hence, we say, if men put an end to consciousness, until the resurrection, by killing the body, they do *ipso facto* kill the soul as well. Both,

¹ Luke xii. 4, 5.

² "Future Life," p. 64.

as such, are rendered by this act virtually non-existent, and, indeed, apart from the intervention of God, forever so. Both must be raised again by divine power, or remain forever destitute of their characteristic being. We are well aware that various analogies have been urged against this view, as, for example, that the soul is unconscious in deep sleep, or after a stunning blow, etc. But these analogies are worthless; for many well-attested facts make it probable, if not certain, that the soul is not, in such instances, really unconscious. Even Whately affirms that "the mind, certainly for the most part, *and probably always*, continues active during sleep, *though in a different manner*, and though the confused ideas occurring in sleep, which we call dreams, are but imperfectly remembered."¹ If the mind is active during the profoundest sleep, when the brain, utterly exhausted, refuses to obey the will, why may it not be active when the brain is disturbed by a blow, and its power to serve the mind suspended? True, it must be active "in a different manner;" and hence, doubtless, the fact that its action is not recalled when the normal connection between the mind

¹ "Future State," p. 82.

and its organ is restored. But, leaving this point, we desire to know precisely how the final destruction of the soul by God is *supposed* to differ from its exinanition at the death of the body? If the result is really the same in both cases, then it must be granted that not only God, but man also, is able to kill the soul; though it may depend upon the will of God whether the soul remain dead forever, or rise again. But this, manifestly, is not the import of the text. The text asserts that man is unable to kill the soul; and this, we repeat, is equivalent to saying that the soul continues alive when the body is slain.

But to the main question: Does the word ἀπολέσαι (*to destroy*) here signify “to put an end to?” We reply in the negative, (1) because the parallel record by Luke gives us instead of this expression the equivalent words “to cast into hell;” and we have seen that the latter phrase does not imply extinction of being. (2) Because the essential distinction between soul and body here intimated, and the selection of different terms to express the danger to which they are respectively exposed, suggests, to say the least, a diversity of peril, and not one common danger. Says Bengel: ἀπολέσαι (*perdere*). *Non*

*dicatur occidere. Anima est immortalis.*¹ And (3), because the Greek word here rendered “to destroy” is often used, as we shall presently show, in a different sense, precisely adapted to this passage, and quite in harmony with other declarations concerning the final state of unbelievers.

We pass on to the words of Christ, “He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”² This verse teaches, it is said, that the man who preserves his personal existence in this world by declining to follow Christ, shall forfeit the same for the world to come; while, on the other hand, whoever loses his life here for Christ’s sake, shall have, by means of the resurrection, eternal consciousness hereafter. Doubtless the language of Christ is in itself alone capable of this interpretation; but it is also equally capable of another, more in harmony with the greater part of God’s word. For nothing is more natural than a play upon the term *ψυχή* (*life*), using it now in a lower and then in a higher sense. In the latter, it is equivalent to the term *ζωή*, as used, by the disciple whom Jesus loved, to designate that

¹ See Meyer, De Wette, and Alford.

² Matt. x. 39.

spiritual life which begins in time, but reaches its bloom and perfection in eternity. So that one who declines the service of Christ has his reward in this world—a life of ease, and indulgence, and temporal safety; but he forfeits all interest in the world above, where the true life of the soul culminates in eternal joy, where fellowship with God is perfect, the spirit seeing as it is seen, and knowing as it is known.

Again: the passage, “Then, also, those who fell asleep in Christ perished,”¹ is insisted upon as proving beyond a peradventure that destruction is an event which terminates conscious existence. Says Ham: “The apostle, in this concise piece of reasoning, distinctly affirms that if there be no destruction of the dead, then there is no future life. He shows, also, what was *his* doctrine of the intermediate state of believers—‘They which have fallen asleep in Christ,’ *not* they which are in a state of disembodied consciousness and activity in glory. But can the orthodox of the nineteenth century agree with Paul in this affirmation, that if the dead rise not, Christians who have departed this life are *perished*? No, they say; ‘if the dead rise not,’ the *soul lives on*—its life does *not depend* upon

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 18.

the resumption of the body. . . . Let criticism and exegesis (on the part of the orthodox) be consistent, and we have the following as the signification of the passage before us: 'Then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*,' they have gone to Gehenna, to endure the endless torments of the unquenchable fire. This is the *theological* sense of *perishing*. I need not characterize such an interpretation as most awfully and insultingly absurd. What! the holy and self-denying followers of Christ, *because the dead rise not*—a *hope* which they had fondly cherished—to be consigned to endless misery! Paul never meant this."¹

To this it may be replied in a word: Paul teaches that *all* men have sinned, even "the holy and self-denying followers of Christ;" that all, without exception, are guilty and condemned before God; that the penalty or wages of sin is death, and pre-eminently the second death, the lake of fire, eternal punishment; that eternal life or blessedness is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ, and him alone; and that Christ cannot be the true Messiah, unless he rose from the dead, according to the Scriptures. Hence, to set aside the resurrection of Christ is to set

¹ "Man in Death," p. 81.

aside the whole economy of grace. Well, then, may the apostle say to believers in Jesus, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; *ye are yet in your sins.*" If the doctrine of the orthodox were this, that the followers of Christ are to be saved because of their holiness and self-denial, there might be some force in Ham's appeal; but since, in their judgment, the most earnest and self-sacrificing Christian has no title in himself to the favor of God, but is to be saved in consideration of Christ's work alone, there is in it no force at all. Says Dr. Hodge: "Perdition, according to Scripture, is not annihilation, but everlasting misery and sin. It is the loss of holiness and happiness forever. If Christ did not rise for the justification of those who died in him, they found no advocate at the bar of God, and have incurred the fate of those who perished in their sins."

This evidently is the apostle's meaning in the verse before us; and it perfectly agrees with the representations which he everywhere makes of the way of life. There is therefore no reason for rejecting the "theological sense of the word *perish*, as most awfully and insultingly absurd," for this passage.

We may notice, in the next place, the words,

“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”¹ We first inquire what is the relation here expressed by ἀπὸ. (1) Some have said it is a *temporal* relation; the word here signifies *after*, and marks the *terminus a quo*, the date from and after which the punishment is to be suffered. But the instances in which ἀπὸ refers to time are in the first place very rare, and in the next quite unlike the one before us, since from the nature of the genitive following it, it is known to designate a *terminus a quo*.² This interpretation may also be considered well nigh obsolete. (2) Others have said it is a *causal* relation; the punishment is represented by ἀπὸ, etc., as *proceeding from* the face, or presence, and from the glory of God, as its source or efficient cause. But they arbitrarily explain the expression “from the *face* of the Lord” as synonymous with “from the Lord,” or they explain προσώπου of an *angry* or *dark* countenance, which is no less arbitrary. (3) Others, still, have said it is a *local* relation; ἀπὸ here expresses the idea of *separation* or *absence*, and the thought is, “*away from* the presence of the

¹ 2 Thess. i. 9.

² Rom. i. 20, ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου (*from the foundation of the world*), and Phil. i. 5, ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας (*from the first day*.)

Lord, and the glory of his power." This explanation gives to *προσώπου* its full significance, for the face or presence of the Lord is a well-known Biblical designation of the source of true blessedness,¹ and separation therefrom of misery. Besides, this interpretation best accords with the following verse. It is advocated by Alford and Lunemann,² given by Robinson in his Lexicon, and preferred by Olshausen. Ellicott closes his examination of *ἀπὸ* by saying, "We therefore adopt the simply *local* translation, according to which *ἀπὸ* marks the idea of 'separation from,' while *προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου* retains its proper meaning and specifies that perennial fountain of blessedness to be separated from which will constitute the true essence of the *pœna damni*." This view we deem correct; and if it be so, the "everlasting perdition" spoken of results in part, if not chiefly, from a want of fellowship with God, and pre-supposes the continuance rather than the extinction of conscious being.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul speaks of "foolish and hurtful lusts, which plunge the men into destruction and perdition;"³ that is to say, into utter and irretrievable ruin. The second

¹ The able continuator of Meyer's commentary.

² 1 Tim. vi. 9.

noun seems in this place to be more emphatic than the first — ἀπώλεια than ὕληθρος — although elsewhere New Testament writers employ either of them, and indiscriminately, to denote the final doom of unbelievers. Now, let it be observed, that there is nothing in the context which requires us to understand these terms as denoting an extinction of being. If they signify this, it is purely *vi termini*, by virtue of their inherent force, and not by virtue of any associated word or clause, which favors such a signification. The same, also, may be said of every passage thus far examined; none of the adjuncts point to extinction of being, and determine this to be the meaning of ‘destruction,’ or ‘perdition,’ when predicated of the soul. Two of them naturally suggest a different meaning. We are therefore bound to inquire whether the words have not another sense equally adapted to these passages, and at the same time consistent with all similar statements in the word of God.

It may be remarked, in the first place, that the New Testament, as well as the Old, generally employs the language of common life. Its style is popular, and therefore figurative. Instead of defining its leading terms beforehand, and then using them always with philosophical

accuracy in the same sense, it freely adopts the vital and elastic speech of real life, and abounds in metaphor, comparison, and parable. The affluence of its imagery is truly oriental. But this imagery rests upon definite truth, unbending reality. The point of difficulty, then, lies in ascertaining the exact idea which is represented by a particular metaphor or parable. To do this it is often necessary to compare different representations of the same idea, event, or process, as e g. the different pictures of the state of the lost hereafter.

It may be remarked, in the second place, that nearly all words have a tropical as well as a literal use. A resemblance, perhaps, in but a single point, is perceived between that which a word literally signifies and something else quite different in other respects; yet the word is applied for want of a better, or for the sake of vivacity. A poet is said to soar on the wings of imagination, and a report to fly through the city; thoughts are said to be dark or bright, and affections to be cold or warm. On the same principle, Christ is called a lion, a lamb, a shepherd, a vine, a root, a branch, &c., and the further back we trace the history of any language, the greater shall we find to be the number and variety of

meanings given to a word by the context. This results from the fact, that in the order of nature and development, thought goes before speech.

It may be remarked, in the third place, that the manifold use of the term "death" in the word of God leads us to anticipate a similar use of the similar term "destruction." The latter is no more precise or descriptive in its meaning than the former; and if it were, this would afford no argument against a figurative use of it. Hence, if the adjuncts of the term "death," when applied to the final state of unbelievers, justify us in attributing to them conscious being in that state, they certainly justify us in doing the same, although destruction, or eternal destruction, is predicated of unbelievers in that state. These adjuncts, we mean to say, are sufficient of themselves to establish a tropical use of the leading terms, had we no other instance of such a use in the New Testament.

It may be remarked, in the fourth place, that the Greek root, which, together with its derivatives, is often represented by the words to "destroy," "destruction," and "perdition," is used not unfrequently in the New Testament, apart also from the case under consideration, when the object of which they are affirmed continues to

exist, and is conceived of as existing. The importance of this statement will be at once recognized, and the propriety of illustrating its truth admitted.

We commence with the words of Christ: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall not *lose* his reward."¹ It would not, perhaps, be a very great refinement of criticism to say, that the object of the verb, the reward, is here conceived of as belonging, in a certain sense, to the subject; it is his by promise, or in equity, and therefore he may be said to *lose* it. Yet it is equally probable that ἀπολέσῃ means "to lose," in the sense of "to fail of." The compound word is not intensive, as some have averred, for Christ surely did not mean to intimate that the benefactor described might partially, though not *utterly*, lose his reward. But we would invite special attention to the fact, that ἀπολέσῃ does not here signify to destroy or put an end to its object, but rather to lose—loose—let go that object, or, what is equivalent, to fail of having and holding it. This verb, which is relied

¹ Matt. x. 42.; cf. Mark ix. 41.

upon to prove the extinction of personal being, simply marks in this place the sundering of a connection, the dissolving of a relation. The object of it may still exist, but the tie which binds together object and subject is no more. To put the matter in another and more usual form: Destruction involves loss; hence the verb signifying to destroy has also the meaning to lose, a derived sense, and may be used where the object in question is not itself destroyed.

Again, we read as follows: "What man of you, if he have an hundred sheep, and *lose* one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost?"¹ Here verb and participle are both employed, signifying "to lose" and "lost." The lost sheep is still in existence, and is eagerly sought by the shepherd. But its connection with the latter is sundered, and for this reason it is declared to be lost—*ἀπολωλός*. Passing now from the parable to the thing signified, Christ represents sinners as lost or destroyed. By wandering away from God, they have destroyed themselves; by sending them away from himself, God will ultimately destroy them. In both cases, it is the separation

¹ Luke xv. 4.

of the soul from God, the sundering of the connection and communion which normally bind them together, that constitutes the destruction or the loss of the soul. When the King shall say to those on his left hand, "*Depart from me,*" and "these shall *go away* into everlasting punishment," then will the final perdition¹ of the soul be brought to pass.

Another passage in the same chapter will repay examination: "This my son was dead and is alive again, was *lost* and is found." ² It is to be distinctly noted, that the father of the prodigal does not seem at any time to have lost sight of his son, or to have supposed him physically dead. "He speaks," says Euthymius Zigabenus correctly, "of the deadness and destruction which flow from sin, and of the reviving and finding which flow from repentance." ³ He speaks as God would speak of the sinner; for "God loveth all men, and counts that as "lost" in itself which he cannot feed and bless, and save forever." When we hear in this parable a father saying of his son, now in his house: "This my son was dead — ἦν νεκρὸς — and was lost — ἦν ἀπολωλὼς " —

¹ Compare the word ἀπὸλλυμι with its synonym *perdere*, in the Greek Lexicon of Liddell and Scott and Latin Lexicon of Andrews; and note especially the use of *perditus* in a moral sense.

² Luke xv. 24, 32.

³ Quoted from Meyer, *in loco*.

a fact in the past, and also bear in mind that the father had known all along the conduct of his son,¹ and therefore could not speak of him as dead, in this sense merely, that he had *supposed* him to be so, we must be convinced that the words "dead" and "lost" refer to moral character, to the total separation in spirit of the son from the father, in a word, to his spiritual death; and at the same time we must be convinced that the words "death" and "destruction" do not, when predicated of the soul, involve its extinction.

Again, an "unclean spirit" is said to have cried out to Jesus: "Hast thou come to destroy us?" Are we, then, to conclude that this demon was in fear of immediate annihilation? Or may we believe that he was in fear of penal confinement? The language of a passage in Matthew may assist us in replying to these questions. For the demons are there reported to have said, "Hast thou come hither to *torment* us before the time?" etc.² The verb employed by them, *βυσσάρσαι*, reminds us at once of the rich man, "who in hades lifted up his eyes, being *ἐν βυσσάροις*," (*in torments*.) So, also, we are told in Luke,³ that

¹ See verse 30.² Matt viii. 8, 29.³ Luke viii. 31.

the evil spirits besought Christ not to send them away into the abyss. And by examining the use of ἄβυσσος in the New Testament it will be found to denote a place of darkness and torment, the abode or prison-house of Satan and his angels.¹

Now, if fallen spirits were spoken of in the Scriptures as being at present in a state of blessedness, or even of freedom from misery, we might easily account for their dread of annihilation; but if they are represented as being now in a state of woe, and if annihilation is so much less appalling than endless suffering as we are told, it is not so easy to account for their deprecating the final hour and the eternal sleep. Besides, the language, "Hast thou come to torment us *before* the time?" implies that fallen spirits look forward to a predestined epoch of special suffering—a time when Christ shall, in a very eminent degree, afflict them. The word βασανισαι refers to the infliction of suffering upon a *conscious being*, and does not accord with the idea of extinction. It is one thing to annihilate, and quite another thing to "torment" a spiritual being.

¹ Rev. ix. 1, 2, 11; xi. 7; xvii. 18; xx. 13; 2 Pet. ii. 4.

And, still further: "The angel of the bottomless pit" is called in the Hebrew tongue *Abaddon*, and in the Greek *Apollyon*, both words signifying *destroyer*; chiefly, we think, because he perverts and morally destroys the souls of men; certainly not because he annihilates their conscious being, nor indeed because he inflicts upon the ungodly their final doom. It is not quite clear to our mind how those who insist so much upon the literal sense of words, and who maintain that death and destruction, whether affirmed of body or of spirit, signify extinction of being, are to explain the name *Abaddon*, and yet assert that "the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power" will, at the last, flash unconsciousness into the souls of the wicked, and petrify them forever. Whom is *Apollyon* to destroy if Christ puts an end to the impenitent? But, on the other hand, if the great adversary is to blot out the soul hereafter, then, doubtless, the words of Christ, according to the dismal interpretation of Stier, warn us to fear the devil, "who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," though very few, we think, will be able to bear this interpretation.

The result of our examination is this: That the words "destruction," "perdition," etc., *need*

not, when predicated of the spirit, be supposed to assert, *vi termini*, or by reason of their intrinsic force, the extinction of its conscious being; and that the adjuncts employed with these words prove that they *do not* involve or affirm such extinction. And it may be added, that the use of the Greek words thus translated by classical writers corroborates the result just given. We rest, therefore, with a strengthened conviction of its truth, in the long-established belief of Christendom that the impenitent dead will be forever conscious and miserable. We rest in this doctrine, not because reason teaches it, or feeling welcomes it, but because it is clearly revealed, as we judge, by One who is just and true, as well as benevolent, and who declares, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."¹ It is a great and terrible doctrine, not to be received with any due sense of its solemnity except by him whose conscience feels the unspeakable guilt of sin, and whose heart says with Job: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."²

¹ Matt. xxiv. 35.

² Job. xlii. 5, 6.

SECTION VI.

FURTHER OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

(1) THE DEAD PRONOUNCED UNCONSCIOUS BY OLD TESTAMENT WRITERS. —
REPLY TO THIS STATEMENT. — (2) THE LANGUAGE OF THE APOSTOLICAL
FATHERS AND EARLY APOLOGISTS CONFIRMATORY OF THE PRECEDING
OBJECTIONS. — THIS ASSUMPTION SHOWN TO BE INCORRECT.

WE come now to a minor objection urged against the doctrine of this essay, namely, —

III. *The dead are declared to be in a perfectly inactive and powerless state, body and soul; hence death is an event which puts an end to conscious existence.*

Of the many passages in the Old Testament which are alleged in support of this proposition, a few only can be submitted to brief examination in these pages; but these few will be specimens of the entire class, and will enable us to test the interpretation given to all.

The Psalmist, speaking of princes, of the son of man in whom there is no help, says: "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in

that very day his *thoughts* perish.”¹ It will be sufficient to remark that the word in the last clause which is rendered “thoughts” signifies the counsels or plans of princes and great men. These shall all fail, and come to nought. “*Sicut*,” remarks Calvin, “*phreneticus ille Alexander Macedo, quum audiret plures esse mundos, deflevit se nondum uno potitum esse, paulo post autem sarcophago contentus fuit.*” Again, the Preacher saith, “All which thy hand findeth to do, do with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou art going.”² Here it may not be amiss to cite a paragraph from the work of Mr. Hudson. “The argument to prove unconsciousness is often based on the expressions, ‘the dead know not anything;’ ‘their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished;’ and, ‘there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.’ But these expressions are evidently the conclusion of an epicurean argument, including the denial of all future life, which the ‘preacher had taken up.’³ It is certainly possible that we have in the book of Ecclesiastes a record of the perplexing doubts

¹ Psalms cxlvi. 4. ² Eccl. ix. 10. ³ “Future Life,” p. 262.

and fruitless speculations of a mind sorely tossed by the mysteries of Providence, and passing on through a period of skepticism to simple faith;¹ and, if so, our passage might obviously represent, not the final and correct belief of Solomon, but an earlier and lurid speculation. But it is hardly necessary to resort to this hypothesis; for we may find a key to the whole paragraph in the last clause of the sixth verse: ‘Neither have they any more a portion forever *in anything that is done under the sun.*’” The writer seems to have in mind the entire separation of the dead from this earthly life and all its activities. If his language is interpreted of personal existence *per se*, without restriction, it militates against any consciousness forever, and therefore against the plain teaching of Christ.

Again, the Lord declares by Jeremiah the prophet, in respect to the princes, sages, and mighty men of Babylon, “they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake.”² Now a future resurrection, whether followed by annihilation or by misery, is inconsistent with a literal

¹ See “The Preaching of Ecclesiastes,” by Rev. J. A. Goodhue, *Chr. Rev.* 1854.

² Jeremiah vi. 57.

interpretation of these words. Yet there will be, as we are taught by the word of God, a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth."¹ Hence we must give up the truth and inspiration of the Bible, or the literal sense of the verse before us. And no thoughtful man, who understands the use of speech in animated prose or in poetry, will hesitate for a moment which to do. To sleep a perpetual sleep, a sleep which knows no waking, here refers to death as an ultimate closing of the eye upon worldly scenes, a sleep from which one does not presently awake to resume the business of this world, a final sleep removing princes and mighty men from the theatre of their pride into the "silent land," "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

For the sake of brevity we present the following passages in a group, appending to them a few words of explanation: "For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare

¹ John v. 28.

thy truth?" "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? thy faithfulness in corruption? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" "The dead praise not God, neither any that go down into silence." "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day."¹

These and similar expressions to be found in the Old Testament do unquestionably, at first sight, and taken by themselves, suggest the idea of unconsciousness after death. They refer, also, it will be perceived, in a majority of instances, to the righteous, and, according to their *prima facie* import, exclude the prospect of a resurrection.² If it makes no difference to a good man at the point of death, whether he will continue conscious in another world, or fall asleep for a million ages to wake as from a moment's slum-

¹ Ps. vi. 6; xxx. 10; lxxxviii. 10-12; cxv. 17; Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19.

² This is admitted by Mr. Hudson; and therefore he does not rely upon these expressions to prove unconsciousness during the intermediate state. — p. 262.

ber at the last trumpet, these "holy men of old," looking forward to a resurrection of the body, could not have used the language cited by us, nor could they have written "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," words which are inconsistent with the doctrine of Christ. The passages adduced cannot, therefore, be explained as a complete account of the departed, but only as a statement of their relation to this world, and to the glory of God in bringing men to a saving knowledge of the truth. They find a natural explanation in the words of Paul, "For me to live is Christ," because I can thereby most signally honor his name. The inspired poets, whose language has been cited, felt that their homage and praise were eminently well pleasing to God, when offered in a revolted province of his empire, to further his holy cause by celebrating "his mighty acts and the glorious majesty of his kingdom." With this plea they came before God to ask for a continuance of life, especially as they were threatened by the enemies of Jehovah, and their death would be the signal of triumph to his foes. The view now suggested rests, we are free to confess, upon a rapid survey of the passages in question; for it was felt that their bearing upon the doctrine of man's

existence after death, must be determined by the clearer revelations made by Christ, and not the reverse ; it affords us, therefore, great pleasure to subjoin a different view from a careful investigator. "The writers of the Old Testament generally speak of death as to its effects on the physical organization, and its results in relation to the concerns and interests of this world. They speak just as we frequently do of death and the grave. We admonish our fellow-men to to work while the day lasts, because the night cometh, and that in the grave there is no knowledge or work ; and so did those writers. But neither they nor we, in these expressions, assert anything for or against the unconsciousness of the soul. We do not believe, and we suppose that they did not believe, that the soul is buried with the body in the grave. We thus explain the passages already cited¹ as referring to physical death, and to the grave as the silent receptacle of the body after the soul has left it."²

It has also been claimed, —

IV. *That the doctrine of this essay was unknown to the primitive church, and must therefore be un-*

¹ Job xiv. 12 ; Ps. xlix. 14 ; cxv. 17 ; Eccl. ix. 10 ; and Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19.

² Meth. Rev. *ut supra*, p. 242.

scriptural. Those who make this claim do not, of course, pretend that the primitive Christians fully apprehended the entire contents of Scripture, but only that the doctrine in question is one of which they could not have been ignorant. As a matter of fact, they say, this doctrine was gradually brought over from pagan philosophy into the creed of the church. The apostolical fathers make no certain allusion to it; and their successors, the early apologists, have it, if at all, as the result of pagan culture. In replying to this objection we shall first speak of the apostolical fathers.

And it is to be lamented that they either wrote very little, or else their writings have, for the most part, perished. All the Christian literature to be relied on as authentic, now in existence from the first quarter of the second century, may be comprised in a small volume; and this literature is intensely practical, touching but lightly and incidentally on points of doctrine. The authors of it were separated by a very wide interval from their inspired teachers. We may think of them as earnest, devout, practical men, repeating the simple story of the cross, occupied with pastoral labor, and encountering with noble heroism the dangers incident to their post; but

we should greatly err in supposing them to have been distinguished for accurate knowledge or logical thought. Hence it was natural for them to present the doctrines of Christianity in the very words of Scripture, giving us often no certain clue to their interpretation of the language; and so it happens, that every denomination of Christians is able to employ their words with more or less confidence in support of its own creed. For doctrinal statements couched in phrases borrowed from the word of God, may be easily understood by the reader as he has concluded to understand the sacred record. With these remarks we pass to the testimony, and find it, as might have been expected, painfully meagre. Still, though meagre, it is not unworthy to be heard.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Ignatius testifies that whoever "corrupts the faith of God by evil doctrine, shall go into unquenchable fire."¹ In the epistle to Diognetus we read: "Then shalt thou condemn the deceit and error of the world, when thou shalt know the true life in heaven; when thou shalt despise the seeming death here; when thou shalt fear the true death which is kept in store for those who shall be

¹ C. 16; cf. his Ep. to the Romans, c. 2 and 4.

condemned to the eternal fire, which will torment them who are committed to it unto the end.”¹ In the account of Polycarp’s death we read that the martyrs, “giving heed to the grace of Christ, despised earthly torments, purchasing release in one hour from eternal punishment. And the fire of their harsh tormentors was cool to them; for they had before their eyes an escape from the eternal fire which is never to be quenched,” *μηδέποτε σβεννύμενον πῦρ*.² From the Shepherd of Hermas³ we extract the following passages: “Again he showed me many trees, some of which were putting forth leaves, and others were dry. Those trees which are green, (said he,) are the just, who shall dwell in the future world. For this future world is *summer* to the just, but *winter* to sinners.” And, a few lines below, it is said that “sinners shall be burned as dry wood.”⁴ In another place the Shepherd compares apostates and betrayers of the church to “dry, rotten, and, as it were, worm-eaten branches,” and, then, says: “All these are dead unto God, and thou seest no one of them exercising repentance.”⁵ Is not the moral or

¹ Ep. to Diog. c. 10.

² Martyr. Polycarpi. c. 2.

³ Written, perhaps, as late as A.D. 150.

⁴ L. III. Simil. 4.

⁵ L. III. Simil. 8. c. 6.

spiritual nature of man here referred to? We are inclined to think there is no reference in this passage to the idea of personal existence as such. We cannot, of course, transcribe every expression which seems to bear upon the topic of this essay; but unless we are mistaken, the most decisive evidence to be found in the literature of the apostolic fathers has now been presented; and according to this evidence it is not safe to affirm that they were either ignorant of, or hostile to, the doctrine of the eternal consciousness of unbelievers. By every impartial student their language will be understood to coincide with that of Scripture, and will therefore be interpreted in harmony with his own views of the Scriptural doctrine.

Let us now come down to the early apologists. It is, however, but a single step; for Justin Martyr, who opens the series, was born in Palestine about the close of the first century. His first apology was addressed to the Roman emperors in the year of our Lord 138 or 139. It is an elaborate production, of unquestionable integrity, and worthy of our serious consideration. In this apology he says to the emperor and his associate: "If you care not for us who offer our petition and exhibit plainly the whole

truth, *we* shall not be injured in the least, since we believe, or rather are fully assured, that each one will *suffer punishment by eternal fire* according to the desert of his actions, and that he will give account to God according to the abilities which he has received, as Christ announced, saying, ‘To whom God gave more, of him likewise shall more be demanded.’” (c. 17.) Again, speaking of the Messiah: “The prophets foretold two comings of him; one which has already transpired, when he came as a despised and suffering man, but the other, when he will come, as we preach, with glory from heaven with his angelic host; when, also, he will raise the bodies of all men who have existed, and will clothe those who are worthy with immortality, but will send the unjust, *in eternal scnsibility*—ἐν αἰσθησει αἰωνια—*with wicked demons, into eternal fire.*” (c. 25.) Once more we read as follows: “In like manner, Plato said that Radamanthus and Minos would punish the unjust who come to them, and we say the same will be inflicted upon them, but by Christ, and while they exist in the same bodies with their souls; moreover they shall suffer *eternal punishment*, but not punishment *for the period of a thousand years only*, as he taught.” (c. 8.) We add a very interesting

passage from his "Exhortation to the Greeks": "Hence as nothing true concerning religion can be learned from your teachers, who offer to you an ample disclosure of their ignorance by their opposition one to another, I think it suitable to revert to our ancestors, who, indeed, preceded by far the times of your teachers, and who taught us nothing from their own imagination; neither did they contend with one another, nor attempt to overthrow the doctrines of one another; but without envy or dissension they received the [true] knowledge from God, and taught this to us. For it is impossible for men to know so great and divine things, either by means of nature or of human thought, but only by the gift, which then descended from above upon the holy men who needed neither the art of words, nor of speaking anything captiously or enviously, but who offered themselves in purity to the energy of the divine spirit, that this divine *plectrum*, descending from heaven, and using the just men as a musical instrument—harp or lyre—might reveal the knowledge of divine and heavenly things to us. Hence for this reason they taught us, consistently and harmoniously with one another, as if from one voice and one tongue, respecting God and the creation

of the world, and the forming of man, and the immortality of the human soul, and the judgment which is to be after this life, and all things which it is necessary for us to know, offering to us this divine teaching in manifold places and times." (c. 8.) Mr. Hudson refers to the above, in proof, it would seem, of the following statement: "In the same treatise he names as truths held *in common*, by the philosophers and the Christians, the doctrines of the divine origin of the world and creation of man, of the soul's immortality, and of judgment after this life." ¹

Turning now to the treatise of Athenagoras upon the resurrection, ² we find these words: "Let no man be surprised if we call the life which is dissevered by death and corruption a continual existence, bearing in mind the fact that the meaning of this appellation is not uniform, the measure of continuance is not uniform, because those which continue in being have not one nature. For if each one of those which continue to be has this continued being according to its own peculiar nature, one cannot find

¹ "Future Life," p. 313. Compare Semisch's "Justin Martyr," vol. II. p. 262 sq., and p. 364 sq., Ryland's translation, for a thorough discussion of Justin's belief; also "Some Account of the Life and Writings of Justin Martyn: By John Bishop of Lincoln," p. 102 sq.

² Written about A.D. 175.

the same sort of continuance among those who are purely incorruptible and immortal, because the natures of the more excellent are not made equal with those which are inferior; neither is it proper to seek in man that even and unchangeable continuance of being; for while the higher natures were made from the first immortal, and continue without death by the will of their Maker, men have in respect to the soul unchangeable being or continuity from birth: but in respect to the body, they receive immortality by means of change — a change required by the nature of the resurrection; and, looking to this, we not only await the dissolution of the body as following this life, which is subject to want and decay, but also after this we hope for continued being with immortality." (c. 16.) This passage evidently recognizes an original and important difference between the soul of man and his body, placing the former in a different relation to endless life from the latter. In his Plea for Christians he uses these words: "We are convinced that, having departed from this life, we shall live another life better than the present, and heavenly, not earthly, (as we shall remain near God, and with God, stable and unsuffering in soul, not as fleshly beings, though we may have flesh, but

as celestial spirit,) or, if we fall with the rest, a *worse life* even by means of fire; for God did not create us like sheep and oxen, a subsidiary work, that we should perish and vanish away; and hence we are not likely to be willfully bad, nor to deliver ourselves up to the great judge to be punished." (c. 31.) "In the system of Athenagoras," says Mr. Hudson, "the immortality of the soul is certainly of nature."¹ About the same time Theophilus wrote to Autolychnus, an educated pagan, in defence of Christianity, and urged him to "believe God and submit to him, lest," he says, "if thou now disbelievest, thou shalt then be convinced, being vexed in eternal punishments; which punishments, having been predicted by the prophets, were stolen by the later poets and philosophers from the Holy Scriptures for the purpose of securing credit to their own opinions. . . . Do thou, also, if it please thee, read studiously the prophetic Scriptures, and they will more clearly direct thee how to flee from the eternal punishments, and to secure the eternal benefits of God." (L. I. c. 14.) Again, he says, "The law and the prophets taught men to refrain from

¹ "Future Life," p. 321.

godless idolatry, and adultery, and murder, fornication, theft, avarice, perjury, wrath, and all lasciviousness and impurity; and that all things whatsoever a man would not have done to himself he should not do to another; and that whoever is thus just in action shall escape the eternal punishments, and be thought worthy of the eternal life with God." (L. II. c. 34.) It should be added, that, while Theophilus appears to have believed in the endless existence of all men, as a matter of fact, he denied the natural immortality of the soul, and affirmed that God only is immortal *per se*. Tatian, who wrote his "Address to the Greeks" near the close of the second century, was the first, we believe, to teach the doctrine of the final extinction of the wicked. And there is far more reason to consider this doctrine an independent speculation of his own, than to suppose it derived by him from the word of God. For although he was, for a time, the friend and admirer of Justin Martyr, he returned to the east, when the latter had suffered death for his loyalty to Christ, and there founded a sect of Gnostics. His opinions, therefore, cannot be attributed indiscriminately to the church of that period. It must further be remarked, that in expounding the Scriptures

he does not exhibit even that moderate degree of care and sobriety which is discoverable in the other apologists of his day.

We may now close this survey by stating the result of our examination in these words: *The records of the primitive church, prior to A. D. 200, afford no evidence that a belief in the endless existence of the soul was brought over from pagan philosophy into the creed of the church*, and no evidence that the early teachers and defenders of Christianity understood the impenitent to be threatened by the word of God with extinction of conscious being as the penalty of sin hereafter. As to the later Christian apologists and teachers, Clement, Origen, Tertullian, and Hippolytus evidently regard the souls of men as destined to exist forever; and we can but question the interpretation of certain passages in the work of Irenæus by which they are said to teach a different belief.¹

¹ On this point see Duncker's *deh. Irenæus CHRISTOLOGIE*, p. 90 seq., and Massueti *Dissertatio III. Irenæi Opera*, vol. II. p. 333 sq., Stieren's edition.

SECTION VII.

RATIONAL OBJECTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.—OBJECTION (1) FROM THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.—REPLY.—(2) FROM THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.—REPLY.—(3) FROM THE BENEVOLENCE OF GOD.—REPLY.—CONCLUSION.

WE have now examined briefly the leading objections drawn from the word of God to our view of the state of the impenitent dead. These objections have been found inconclusive. They are not of such a nature as to countervail a single clear affirmation of endless personal existence on the part of the wicked.

Here, then, it might be well to pause; for the Scriptures are our *sole* authority on this subject. As their testimony leads, or even leans, our belief must humbly follow. But many persons choose to begin their study of this great theme at the very point where we are inclined to finish. Having little reverence for the word of God, they sometimes call in question its infallibility, and often treat its language with less deference

than is paid to their own speculative reason. Whatever may be their theory of inspiration, they do not hesitate to interpret the sacred oracles into harmony with their limited and interested judgment, to adjust, by a never-ending process, revealed theology to their floating ideas of natural theology. Hence, as might well be expected in such a case, after insisting upon the *unreasonableness* of the doctrine of eternal misery as the wages of sin, they make haste to repudiate this doctrine, and to extract from the living word some justification of their course. We propose, therefore, to review some of the arguments which are said to prove the doctrine of this essay to be *unreasonable*.

Still, we rest the truth of our doctrine, be it observed, upon the testimony of divine revelation, and cannot therefore be required to show that it is a doctrine of natural theology, taught by unaided human reason. If it is to be found in the sacred record, all the reasons—and they are unanswerable—which prove that record to be an expression of God's will, combine to make a belief in this doctrine reasonable. Whoever, therefore, would overthrow it by the weapons of human philosophy, and thus prejudice or preclude the testimony of revelation, must take upon

himself the *onus probandi*, and prove it to be positively *unreasonable*. He must show that the human mind may be relied upon in the premises, and that, while rightly estimating the guilt of sin as well as the supposed doom of the sinner, it pronounces the latter to be *unjust* or *unmerciful*.

And here let the difficulty of this task be noted. The human mind, has it any power to apprehend the quantitative relations of sin and punishment? Is it able in any case to determine by itself the exact penalty, whether of loss or of pain, which is due to a responsible being for a given violation of right? Neither the logical understanding nor the power of rational insight in man is capable, it seems to us, of doing this — of adjusting retribution to moral wrong. Not even conscience has in itself, apart from the spirit of God, any measure or standard by which it can ascertain the *quantum* of penalty which is justly annexed to each different degree of human sinfulness. This, perhaps, is a kind of knowledge which God has reserved in his own power, giving to us facts without philosophy, and thus treating us for the present as little children, who are unable to fathom the deepest questions of his moral government. Turning now to the

actual judgment of mankind, there are some, it appears, who exclude the very notion of punishment from the divine administration, declaring that all suffering is preventive or reformatory. There are others who admit the reality of penal retribution, but restrict it to the loss of possible good, whether this good be defined as happiness or as conscious being itself; and there are others — hitherto the vast majority of mankind — who believe in punishment for sin, both positive and negative, in time and in eternity. Now, whatever may be the merit of either, or of all these opinions, the simple naming of them brings up at once the query, whether human reason can be trusted in the premises, and whether an argument founded upon it must not be, at least, exceedingly precarious.

But, leaving this thought, let us take up the arguments which are said to prove our belief *unreasonable*. And, —

I. The doctrine of eternal misery as the penalty of sin is irreconcilable with the doctrine of God's *omnipotence*; for it affirms the endless existence of what is hostile to God and abhorred by him. The same objection, it has often been replied, may be urged against the existence of moral evil at all; for it is diametrically opposed

to the moral nature of God, whether it exist for a day or forever. Yet moral evil is permitted; and once actual in the universe, it is ever actual to him who is without succession, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, with whom "a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years."¹

II. The doctrine of eternal misery, as the penalty of sin, is irreconcilable with the *righteousness* of God; for the penalty is altogether too great for the offence. This is true, it is alleged, whether we consider the sinner's probation as very brief, his knowledge as very limited, or his condition as very unfavorable. Let us examine, one by one, the grounds of this objection.

The sinner's probation, we are reminded, is *very brief*, as if God were in haste to fix his doom. There is no conceivable proportion between the longest life on earth and endless existence hereafter; but justice requires that the duration of punishment be proportioned in every case to that of the offence. Hence eternal woe cannot be the wages of sin committed in the present life. The righteousness of God forbids it.

¹ See Erbkam's elaborate article "Uber d. Lehre v. d. ewigen berdamniss," in the *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1838, p. 384 sq.; also T. M. Post, in the *New Englander*, 1856, p. 115 sq.

In reply to the objection thus stated, we remark (1), that it mistakes the length of a sinner's probation for the degree of his guilt; in other words, it assumes that a great moral wrong cannot be perpetrated in a short time; but this is a palpable error. In judging men here, we do not measure the guilt of an act by the time consumed in its performance, nor do we adjust the penalty to that time. Crimes of the greatest malignity, and meriting the severest retribution, may be committed in a moment. The element of time is taken into account, simply because it may serve to reveal the deliberate malice of the offender. We also remark (2), that the omniscience of God must be borne in mind when we contrast the sinner's probation with his final doom. For this attribute of Jehovah permits us to assume that the determinate character of an individual is just as fully revealed to him by a brief period of trial as by a longer one. What advantage to justice, so far as the sinner is concerned, will there be gained by prolonging the trial? What principle of equity requires the Supreme Ruler to extend indefinitely the probation of one who has shown himself to be fully set upon evil, and utterly opposed to holiness?

We remark (3), that serious men of every

creed accept the doctrine of *eternal* retribution for *temporal* sin. Those who believe in the final salvation of all men admit that there are different degrees of happiness in the life to come, and maintain that wickedness here diminishes happiness there. This diminution is *eternal* loss for *temporal* sin, eternal detriment for evil-doing in time. The same may also be said of those who believe in the personal extinction of the wicked hereafter. For the sin of a day, they are punished with the loss of all good forever and ever. And, if this may be consistent with perfect righteousness, who shall say that what is even more to be dreaded, eternal misery, must be inconsistent with righteousness? Is not the principle and the difficulty the same in both cases?

Again, the sinner's knowledge is said to be very limited. He is unable to form any adequate conception of eternal blessedness or misery, and knows but imperfectly the will of God. In a word, he appreciates neither the *penalty* nor the *claims* of the "divine" law as thus explained; and, therefore, it would be unjust to inflict so heavy a punishment upon him.

To this form of the objection we reply: (1) That the righteousness of a law, including its

penalty, does *not depend upon the penalty's being known and appreciated beforehand*. For if it does, then obviously a man is *guilty*, not because he does wrong, but because he braves suffering — not in proportion to his disregard of a just requirement, but in proportion to his disregard of self — not as one who tramples on right, and does that which, being *in itself* wrong, *deserves* punishment, but as one who ignores danger, and exposes himself to threatened misery ; in a word, he is *guilty*, if we may thus abuse language, not because he is *sinful*, but because he is *unwise*. A previous knowledge of penalties may obviously tend to prevent crime ; but it neither makes nor enhances the criminality of an act, except, perhaps, in so far as it enlightens the moral judgment of the perpetrator. It is no excuse for undue severity on the part of a ruler, to say, that his subjects were distinctly forewarned of it ; for many a tyrant has pre-announced the unjust and inhuman tortures which would follow the slightest disregard of his will. Nor, on the other hand, is an ignorance of the penalties to be inflicted for any given crime the least excuse to the criminal for his act of sin. Theft is no less wrong in a country where it is punished with imprisonment than in one where it is punished with death. If,

then, it would be just in God to sentence unbelievers to eternal misery, provided they had continued such with a full knowledge and appreciation of their coming doom, it is equally just for him to pronounce and execute that sentence, although they have no adequate conception of the doom beforehand. And let it also be noted that neither pain nor deprivation can be truly understood or appreciated except by experience. Tell a man, for instance, of the headache or toothache, of lingering torture or solitary confinement, who has never experienced that of which you speak, and the language employed, however suitable in itself, will be to him like the sounding brass or tinkling cymbal; it will have no true and definite meaning. Hence, were it necessary to the justice of a punishment that it should be really comprehended beforehand, there could be no just punishments in any administration, human or divine.

And (2), as to a knowledge of the *divine law*, or the rule of duty, we maintain that it is within the reach of every man, not perhaps in all its breadth and spirituality, but so far forth as he is held responsible for its violation. Men everywhere do what they know to be wrong. If any portion of the divine will is disclosed to them,

that portion they disregard and trample in the dust. If, then, we bear in mind that the intensity of woe hereafter is to be adjusted to the guilt of the sinner as measured by his disposition, and by his means of knowledge, and that every man does know something of God's will which he deliberately contemns, the force of this objection seems to be completely destroyed. But we are also, in this connection, to bear in mind the omniscience of God. He knows the hearts of all, and the exact amount of light offered to such as have not the gospel. And, at the same time, we are to remember the words of truth: he "that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much;"¹ words which go far to answer some of the darkest insinuations which are made against the government of God.

Once more: The sinner's condition while on trial is very unfavorable; he is predisposed to evil from the first; he does wrong as surely as he has an opportunity to do wrong. It cannot, then, we are told, be right to inflict so dreadful a penalty for transgression upon one whose condition is so unfavorable to virtue.

¹ Luke xvi. 10.

A great difficulty, we are free to confess, is brought forward in this objection; but, however great it may be, there is no more reason why it should be urged against the doctrine of this essay than against any doctrine which makes man responsible for his moral conduct. For the difficulty consists, not in the estimate which is put on the guilt of sin, but in holding one to be really and truly responsible for it notwithstanding the bias of a fallen nature. Whatever moral evil there is in our race must be chargeable either to mankind or to God; for to attempt a division of the responsibility is absurd. But if we admit that men, rather than God, must be held responsible for their unrighteousness, the objection under notice loses all its weight. There may be still in the case a great difficulty to finite reason—a mystery altogether above our comprehension—but human responsibility for sin, and, indeed, for all the sin in man, is, nevertheless, a *fact* attested by conscience, and affirmed by the word of God—a *fact* not to be evaded nor set aside without, at the same time, undermining the foundations of all religion and morality. While, then, conscience, revelation, and the common sense of mankind hold the wrongdoer to be guilty for his deed notwithstanding a

native bias to evil, neither this sinful proclivity, nor any other feature of his condition in the present life, can be urged against the justice of punishing him for unrighteousness, and according to the intrinsic ill-desert of the latter.

Finally, the doctrine of eternal misery as the punishment of sin is irreconcilable with the doctrine of *God's benevolence*; for infinite benevolence, we are assured, would have made the probation of man longer, his knowledge greater, and his moral nature better, if the period of trial was to be followed in so many instances by so awful a doom.

As to the length of man's probation, we reply, it is not too short for the exercise of repentance and faith; nor is there any probability that greater numbers would be led to repentance were the probation of man a thousand years instead of threescore and ten. Indeed, there is ample ground for believing that the brevity of his trial is a merciful arrangement. Before the lives of men were shortened, their wickedness became intolerable in the earth; and such, we believe, is human nature, that men would be less likely than they now are to turn from sin, were the period of hope and grace indefinitely or even greatly extended.

In responding to the second specification, we ask for proof that any increase of knowledge would of itself have the effect of leading those men who now disregard the will of God to obey that will. The ways of Providence, it may be, are so carefully directed and so perfect, that no man has ever continued in unbelief to the end of life, who would have turned to Christ had simply his knowledge of divine truth been greater. When it is proved that some individual of our race has sought with an honest mind, but in vain, for the truth, or has had a disposition of heart which truth could mould, *sua virtute*, into the likeness of Christ, then this objection may be pronounced valid, but not before; and its cogency would depend, even then, upon the assumption that God is controlled by the principle of benevolence *solely*, having no regard to right and justice, except as means to an end.

To the third specification we reply, that the infinite benevolence of God does not prevent him from holding men responsible in spite of their depraved nature for sinful conduct, nor from punishing them for it in this life. Individuals and nations are not unfrequently destroyed for their crimes. But if punishment —

if retribution, in the proper sense of these terms, is not *in itself* inconsistent with supreme benevolence, it is obviously impossible for us to say that retribution, *up to the full demands of justice*, is so. He only who knows all things can determine whether any relaxation of the penalty due to sin will promote the highest good of his rational subjects. And here it may be noted, that none are more disposed to urge the plea of *insanity* in behalf of the murderer, than men who object to the doctrine of divine retribution in a future life. But, by urging this plea, they do tacitly admit the justice and fitness of penal retribution, were there no such plea to be offered. Nor can the significance of this admission be destroyed without going still further, and asserting, that, just so far as one sins, is there evidence of his insanity and moral irresponsibility—a statement which virtually denies the existence of moral character and government, gives the lie direct to conscience, and darkens fearfully the prospect of a life beyond the grave.¹

There are, however, it is well known, many persons to whom the benevolence of God seems to be inconsistent with *penal* retribution in his

¹ See a fuller discussion of several topics here alluded to in the Chr. Rev., October, 1851, by the writer of these pages.

government, and who therefore look upon all suffering as either preventive, reformatory, or disciplinary, and boldly reject the doctrine of *any limit* to probation. But, in denying there is any limit to probation, they overlook, we are compelled to think, the analogy of God's government in the present life. For the laws of our bodily organization may be violated to a certain extent, and for a limited time, without permanent injury. There is a recuperative force in the human system, which, up to a certain point, repairs the injury ; but beyond that point there is no recovery except by miracle, and the bodily probation, so to speak, terminates. So, also, with character. Actions have been performed so base and malignant, especially when repeated with deliberate purpose, as to destroy beyond remedy our confidence in the perpetrator. Hence, the course of events in this life clearly suggests the doctrine of a limit to moral probation. But it should be distinctly noted, that this doctrine does not represent God as at any time rejecting the penitent ; it may rather be said to affirm the final and steadfast, and criminal impenitency of the lost. Not so much outward bars as inward passions shut them out of heaven. The limit of their probation may be marked

simply by a withdrawal of the spirit of God, leaving them to hasten without restraint from the fountain of all good.

Analogy, then, is against the doctrine of unlimited probation; and, hence, it may be presumed that reason also, when fairly applied, will be found against it. To attempt this application may, perhaps, be rash; but we cannot wholly forbear. Let us, then, taking the position of our opponents, and reasoning from the single idea of benevolence, assume that the object of penal suffering in the divine economy is not the satisfaction of righteousness or justice, but solely the good of the offender. Let us further assume that suffering does not act as a mechanical force — as purgatorial fire, consuming, literally, the dross of evil passions, and leaving the spirit pure — but rather as a moral agency appealing to the soul, and urging it to the choice and pursuit of holiness. And let us finally assume two facts which rest upon a wide range of observation, namely, that men are now involved in sin, and that their delight in moral evil is ever upon the increase. How, then, shall God in his benevolence arouse the slumbering reason of mankind, and move them by the argument from suffering to enter the path of endless peace, even

at the cost of present self-denial and conflict? Is it not obvious that the earliest and the strongest consideration possible must be used to persuade them? And how can the prospect of misery be laid before the self-seeking spirit, and made so effectual for good, as by affixing a *limit* to probation, and making the *result endless*? In what other way can so strong, and earnest, and *benignant* an appeal be made? How, otherwise, can so many be moved to renounce what they now love, and seek a higher good? And how else can God exhibit the strongest possible desire to persuade all men to forsake evil and become forever blessed? Not assuredly by giving to mankind a longer, but still limited probation; for, as we have before seen, this would diminish the likelihood of repentance and the number of the saved. Nor, indeed, by making probation endless; for in that case no appeal could be drawn from the *prospect* of evil. For the sinner would know that his present act of sin involves but the attendant suffering or loss, nothing in the future really depending upon it. And as he loves sin now, and chooses it, notwithstanding the attendant evil, so will he, moment by moment, forever. And this surely is to eliminate from the idea of

punishment not merely the *retributive*, but also the *preventive*, element as well.

The objection now before us, it will be seen by all, rests upon the assumption that God is simply benevolent, and not distinctively righteous ; that the only moral attribute which he has to express is goodness, and the *sole* object of his government to secure the happiness of his creatures. But this view appears to us irreconcilable with the phenomena of conscience, the workings of Providence, and the declarations of Scripture. These all testify that righteousness is a fundamental attribute of the Godhead ; that he loves rectitude for its own sake, its essential beauty and excellence, as well as happiness for its own sake ; and, hence, that it will not do for us to conclude, from the attribute of benevolence alone, what will be the process of God's moral administration hereafter. There is, we think, a great error at this point in the reasonings of those who deny the endless misery of the impenitent dead.

Here we pause. It has been shown by the certain testimony of God's word that the impenitent dead are to be forever conscious and miserable, and that the objections to this view, whether derived professedly from divine

revelation or human reason, are unworthy of confidence. How momentous, then, are the interests which depend upon human conduct in the present life! Let not the reader, in closing this little volume, forget that good and evil, life and death, are placed before him; that *now* is the accepted time; NOW is the day of salvation. And may God lead us all to repentance, for his Son's sake: AMEN.

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PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE REFERRED TO IN THIS ESSAY.

Book.	Chapter and Verse.	Page.
GENESIS,	..... ii. 7,	14
“	..... ii. 17,	18, 28
“	..... iii. 19,	30
“	..... iii. 22,	16, 17, 18
EXODUS,	..... x. 28,	101
“	..... xii. 33,	99
“	..... xxii. 23,	97
NUMBERS,	..... xvii. 27,	99
“	..... xxiii. 10,	96
JUDGES,	..... xvi. 30,	97
1 KINGS,	..... ii. 36, 37,	101
“	..... xix. 3,	97
JOB,	..... xiv. 12,	130
PSALMS,	..... vi. 6,	127
“	..... xxx. 10,	128
“	..... xlix. 14,	130
“	..... lxxxviii. 10, 12,	128
“	..... cxv. 17,	128, 130
“	..... cxlvi. 4,	125
ECCLESIASTES,	..... iv. 2,	36
“	..... ix. 5,	36
“	..... ix. 6,	126

Book.	Chapter and Verse.	Page.
ECCLESIASTES,	ix. 10,	125, 130
“	xii. 7,	16
ISAIAH,	xxxviii. 18, 19,	128, 130
JEREMIAH,	li., 57,	126
DANIEL,	xii. 2,	70, 71
ZECHARIAH,	xii. 1,	14
MATTHEW,	vii. 21, 22, 23,	73
“	viii. 29,	120
“	viii. 11, 12,	86
“	viii. 22,	32, 40
“	x. 28,	16, 104
“	x. 39,	108
“	x. 42,	117
“	xiii. 41, 42, 49, 50,	86
“	xvii. 3,	64
“	xxi. 19,	44
“	xxii. 31, 32,	66, 69
“	xxv. 30,	87
“	xxv. 41, 46,	84, 119
MARK,	i. 24,	120
“	iii. 29,	44
“	ix. 9,	64
“	ix. 41,	117
“	ix. 47, 48,	86
“	xi. 14,	44
LUKE,	i. 54, 55,	44
“	viii. 31,	120
“	xii. 4, 5,	105
“	xiii. 27, 28,	87
“	xv. 4,	118
“	xv. 24, 32,	119, 120
“	xvi. 19, 31,	54, 55, 120

Book.	Chapter and Verse.	Page.
LUKE,	..... xx. 38,	66
“	.. ..... xxiii. 43,	63
JOHN,	..... i. 4,	51
“	..... iii. 16,	38
“	..... iv. 14,	39, 45
“	..... v. 24,	39
“	..... v. 28,	127
“	..... vi. 47, 53, 63,	41
“	..... vi. 51, 58,	45
“	..... viii. 35, 51, 52,	40, 45
“	..... x. 28,	46
“	..... xi. 25, 26,	42
“	..... xii. 34; xiii. 8; xiv. 16,	46
“	..... xvii. 3,	47
ACTS,	..... vii. 59,	16
“	..... xxiii. 8,	67
ROMANS,	..... i. 20,	112
“	..... v. 12,	18
“	..... vi. 2, 6, 11,	103
“	..... vi. 4, 13,	49
“	..... vi. 13,	37
“	..... vii. 4; viii. 13,	40
“	..... xi. 15,	37
1 CORINTHIANS,	..... xiii. 12,	14
“	..... xv. 18,	108
“	..... xv. 44,	21
“	..... xv. 45, 46,	17
“	..... xv. 53,	20
2 CORINTHIANS,	..... ii. 16,	40
“	..... v. 6-8,	58
“	..... vii. 10,	40
“	..... xii. 2 sq.,	15

Book.	Chapter and Verse.	Page.
GALATIANS,	ii. 19,	40
EPHESIANS,	ii. 1, 5,	34
“	ii. 4, 6,	49
“	v. 14,	37, 40
PHILIPPIANS,	i. 5,	112
“	i. 21-24,	61
COLOSSIANS,	ii. 13,	34, 49, 100
“	ii. 20,	103
“	iii. 3,	103
“	iii. 5,	40
“	iii. 1, 10,	49
2 THESSALONIANS,	i. 9,	112
1 TIMOTHY,	v. 6,	35
“	vi. 9,	131
TIMOTHY,	vi. 16,	23
HEBREWS,	i. 14,	23
“	vi. 1,	33, 40
“	ix. 14,	33
“	xii. 23,	24
2 PETER,	ii. 9,	121
1 JOHN,	iii. 14,	40
“	v. 16, 17,	40
REVELATION,	ii. 11,	79
“	iii. 1,	33
“	vi. 9-11,	64
“	ix. 1, 2, 11; xi. 7,	121
“	xiv. 10, 11,	82
“	xx. 1, 3; xvii. 8,	121
“	xx. 6, 11-15,	79
“	xx. 10,	78
“	xxi. 8; xxii. 15,	81

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
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